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TREATISE

Of the Celestial
Work and Worship:

Or, The Sacred
Employments and Services
OF THE
Blessed SPIRITS in HEAVEN;
Consider'd, Stated, Open'd and Improv'd, from
ISAIAH VI. 3.

To which is prefix'd,

Two DISCOURSES.

ONE, *Of Leaving the WORLD,*
from *John xvi. 28.*

The OTHER, *Of the Way and Passage of the SAINTS to HEAVEN,*
with their Admission and Reception thither,
from *2 Peter i. 11.*

By ROBERT FERN.

HEBREWS VI. 19.

— And which entreth into that within the Vail.

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ЧИТАЕТЬ



THE

PREFACE.



SEEK not out for any earthly Patron for the following Sheets, but covet and implore the Patronage of Heaven: To whose Protection, Providence and Grace,

I commit 'em, (whose Cause it is that they espouse;) that they may do some little Service, and be of some Use, to the Advancement of his Kingdom and Religion in the World; if he'll please to employ such unworthy Lines to such honourable Ends and Purposes.

ALL that are not Infidels and Atheists, must acknowledge the Greatness and Importance of the Subjects here discours'd

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of; and that they ought to be the Concernment of Christians, and are necessary for all to be acquainted with, that have precious and immortal Souls to take care of. Surely they that are Strangers to, and unmindful of leaving the World, of everlasting Happiness, and the Way thither, are chargeable with the Neglect of Matters of the greatest Consequence. How happy would it be, if those that afford these Composures, either slighty, or more deliberate Views, might come to have their Minds and Affections diligently and seriously exercis'd about 'em for the future!

It is only the Management then that can be censur'd and condemn'd, and that such weighty Matters are not drawn up with greater Suitableness to the Dignity and Excellency of them. But what human Undertakings are there that do not misrepresent and debase divine Truths? And when we consider what Approbation and Success Discourses upon Heaven have been entertain'd with, who knows but one so much inferior to 'em may not be altogether useles, but do some Service to the Interest and Cause of Piety in the World?

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To which Purpose the Apostle tells us, *1 Cor. i. 27, 28.* that God has sometimes chosen the foolish, weak, and base Things of the World, to honour and gain Glory to Himself by them.

WRITING upon Subjects that have not been cultivated and improved already by Authors, unless touch'd upon by the By, much resembles the cutting out a new Path to walk in, which is more difficult than going in a beaten and common Road. And this is the very Case of this Treatise; for none that have occurr'd to me have handled this Point on purpose and particularly, but only drop'd here and there a Sentence about it. And this Consideration is an Inducement to overlook and pardon the Weaknesses and Infirmities, that searching and accurate Heads may discover and observe in it.

WE have so much of Heaven made known and reveal'd to us in the Scriptures, as is a sufficient Fund and Stock for great Discoveries of it, if it were rightly and fully improved, by Explication, Argumentation, and Reasoning upon and making

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Deductions from it. And while we keep to this Method, we cannot justly be charged with prying into Things and Secrets forbidden. And is it not great Pity that these Advantages should be neglected, and these Matters not be brought into the Light, but lie undiscover'd, when they are capable of some Manifestation, and would be so greatly Useful and Beneficial to us?

UNDER the great Degeneracy and Decay of Piety, every Article of it needs an Advocate and Defender, and consequently this of Heaven and a future State of Happiness particularly. We have not managed the Point against the Atheist and Ungodly of the present Age, it's true; but with respect to Christians, to obviate the Coldness and Decays of Love and Zeal, that they are fal'n under as to these Matters, and that we may recover the Estimation, Value and Prosecution of them, that they are in the highest Manner deserving of; which, if it could be obtain'd, would much conduce to the Restoration of Godliness.

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THE Treatise of the *Work and Worship of the celestial World* was first form'd, and a Draught of it mostly made; when After-Meditations suggested, it might be proper to draw up something as an Introduction to it: Whereupon I thought the two Subjects of *Leaving the World*, and the *Passage of the Godly to Heaven, with their Admission and Reception thither*, would be very agreeable thereunto.

THERE needs an Apology for the Whole, and particularly for the Discourses prefix'd, which have had a more hasty Composure; but we are ready to own the Deficiency of all. More Pains and Consideration about 'em, would have expung'd some Things in 'em, fill'd up and supply'd some Vacancies; and added some new Beauties to 'em, and thereby made 'em more acceptable to some Readers; which, if another Edition be call'd for, probably may be perform'd, if the Lord permit. But they are not curious, nice and speculative Persons, but practical, honest Readers, who have a Relish of sacred Truths, that we calculate for.

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I know not what can justly be object-ed against the Scheme of the heavenly State we have form'd and laid down in the following Account: We have asserted nothing but what seems consonant, and to comport with the Scriptures; have spoken honourably of it, what has a Ten-dency to the Glory of God, and a Suit-ability to the Nature of Spirits who have a great Activity, and are made fit to be employ'd in the highest and noblest Ser-vices; and been ready to make a rever-ent Retreat, and give back with Silence, when we have been wading into the Depths and Abysses of it. We have made it, 'tis true, a Place of Duty, and great Performances; but it is of such as are consistent with a perfect State: And in what we have deliver'd about it, have en-deavour'd to speak of it in the most ele-vated and becoming Manner, becoming the Magnificence of that glorious World. Had we, with some of the Antients, gues'd at and discours'd of the Order of Angels, adventur'd upon a Distinction of 'em, and been positive and definitive in our Accounts of 'em, with other Things of

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of a like Nature; this would have been presumptuous, sinful, and blame-worthy.

FROM the Nature of these Discourses, the Design of 'em (besides what we have already hinted) is evident, *viz.* to cure us of many Faults we are guilty of about this blessed World, and give us right and due Respects towards it; to work and carry off those Clouds of Ignorance and Estrangedness we lie under thereunto. It may amaze one to think, what little Knowledge there is of Heaven in the Christian World, what slender Measures of Acquaintance with it most take up with, when it is manifest that more might be attain'd. So likewise, to take away that great Forgetfulness and Unmindfulness of it, that the Professors of this Age are laps'd into. Entercourse and Communion with Heaven is much abated and at a Stand: And it is further in our View to lay open a little the everlasting State, and bring it more into the Light, to promote the Knowledge of it, raise our Estimation, Value and Preference of Things eternal, and to lower and depress temporal Ones, 2 Cor. iv. 18. to assist us in forming

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Conceptions of it, and prevail with us to set our Hearts and Affections upon it, *Col. iii. 1, 2.* to renew our Prosecution and Seeking of it ; exercise the Graces of Faith, Love, Joy and Delight upon it, and work us up to a Likeness to it, and for it. In a Word : These, and all other such happy Effects, we are desirous to pursue, and promote by the ensuing Sheets : And this will be attain'd, if the Great God please to put his *Amen* unto it.

IT is some Satisfaction, that I have taken these small Pains with the essential and uncontroverted Points of Godliness, and that tend to promote Faith and Practice. And it were to be wish'd, that all the controversial Pens of the Day (except those that are engaged in the Defence of necessary Truth) were employ'd in practical Matters, and what might tend to the promoting Reformation and Piety.

IT must be expected that the Perusers of Books will have pass'd different Judgments and Sentiments upon 'em ; so that what

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what one condemns and dislikes, others with good Reason may approve of, even as Persons have different Palates and Relishes of the same Food. Such as this is the Fate and Lot of Books; and so it will happen as to the ensuing Performance. But be the Censures never so many or great, if it may conduce to the Good of others, (for Prejudice bars all Hopes of Success and Profit from the best Undertakings) it will be a sufficient Reward for the Pains taken about it, and all Charges against us will be forgotten and slighted by that Means.

To conclude: Tho' these be weak and empty Lines, yet we shall earnestly request the Great God will impregnate and give 'em Spirit, some Force and Energy, that they may be of some Use, and do some Service in the World: And nothing can work or operate without such a sovereign Hand and Agency. In a Word: If any learn from 'em how to leave the World in a right Manner, collect and gather some profitable Instructions from it about their Passage from this State and World to the future One, and be induced

and

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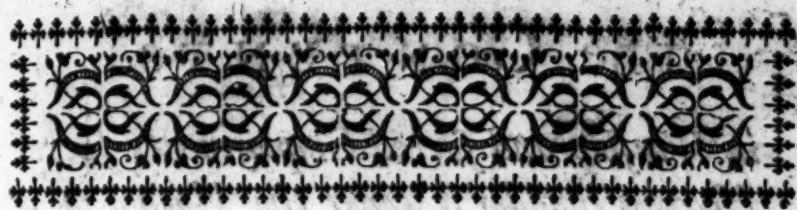
and prevailed with to become more diligent Lovers, Admirers and Seekers of this everlasting Rest and Happiness, we shall rejoice; but if they read and continue fruitless, it will be to the Grief of the

Unworthy Author,

R. F.



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A



DISCOURSE
Leaving the WORLD,
FROM
JOHN XVI. 28.

*--Again, I leave the World,
and go unto the Father.*



HIS and the three preceding Chapters, the xiiith, xivth, and xvth, are truly call'd the last and dying Speeches of our Blessed Saviour to his Apostles; as the Preface to 'em manifests, Ch. xiii. i.

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his Hour was come, that he should depart out of this World unto the Father. And he seems to be affected with two

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Things principally in 'em. 1. With the Case of his Apostles, that they might be supported and comforted, and manage aright when he was taken from 'em. 2. About his own Departure: Of which we might give several Instances, and particularly the Words of the Text, —*Again, I leave the World, and go unto the Father.*

We may observe the Terms which our Lord uses to express himself hereabouts; in Chap. xiii. 1. It's call'd a Departing out of the World; in Chap. xvii. 11. it is, *And now I am no more in the World;* and in the Text he calls it a Leaving the World. And we may remark, that when he speaks of leaving it, he always mentions whither or to whom he goes, *viz.* to God, to his Father. So Chap. xiii. 1. *That he should depart out of this World, unto the Father;* And in Chap. xvii. 11. —*But these are in the World, and I come to thee, Holy Father.* So in this xvith Chap. 15. *A little while, and ye shall not see me: And again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.* So the 5th Verse, *But now I go my Way to him that sent me;* and Verse 10. *Because I go to the Father:* So in the Text. And we may note, that in all these Places, except one, he speaks of his Father in common, as his, and the Father of all Believers; and not by way of Appropriation to himself, or as his Father in a peculiar Manner. This we see then was the Center and Sum of his Hopes, Joys and Expectations, *viz.* The perfect Fruition of his Father, in conjunction with all his Followers; and the Glory appointed him there: He's willing that his should be Partners with him in his glorious Privileges. Even so, when we think of leaving the World, or, our Leaving it draws near, we should think whither

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whether we are going, of the World, the Place and Company we are going to.

1st Doctrine. THE leaving the World, or departing out of it, is a Point that calls for great Consideration. Our Blessed Saviour was much upon this Subject, and so shou'd his Servants and Followers be.

2d Doctrine. THE leaving the World is accompanied with going to God the Father, to Heaven. Our Lord comforted himself with this, and so should all his do.

THIS should be every one's Study, passing from one State, and from one Manner of Being to another; especially such a one as we enter upon, when we leave this World, is a great Affair. We are sent into it without actual Cogitation, or Understanding to discern what Being is, or what it is to come upon the Stage of Action; but God gives us Faculties to know our Work, and prepare for going out of the World. And this is what we should be most intent and careful about. Now that we may assist you herein is the Design of this Discourse, that you may not be of that Number that forgets this great Affair, and are found unfit for a Removal; but of those that keep it with great Sense and Liveliness upon their Minds and Affections, and prepared for going hence.

WE shall discourse upon this Subject under the following Heads:

- I. CONSIDER how our Blessed Saviour left the World.
- II. TAKE this great Point under Consideration with respect to ourselves: Shew how we should leave the World: What's our Duty thereabouts.

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III. THAT

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III. THAT in our Meditations upon this Subject (in Imitation of Christ) we should have our Eyes terminated upon the future Happiness.

IV. THAT leaving the World is a Point that should have our special Consideration.

V. THE Improvement. Of all which we shall discourse in their Order.

I. ENQUIRE how our Lord left the World.

As his coming into the World was extraordinary and particular, so his leaving it was singular and different from that of his Followers. None ever begun, manag'd and finish'd like him. He acted a faithful happy and glorious Part herein from first to last.

1. He had no Ground or Matter for Repentance, and Complaints for his past Life and Actions: He drew no irregular or crooked Lines, made no Errors in any Thing that he did, but all was squared by and according to the Laws he was subject to: *He did no sin, 1 Pet. ii. 22.* He had shed Tears, (and was *a man of Sorrows, Isa. lxxi. 3.*) but none for himself but others, *Luke xix. 41. He beheld the City and wept over it.* He never offended his heavenly Father, but always did the Things that pleas'd him, *John viii. 29.* and that without any Interruption. What Pity is it that so choice a Pattern is no better copied after.

2. He compleatly perform'd and fully executed the grand Message and Business he came about into the World: He had this chiefly in his Eye and Care, *John ix. 4. I must work the Work of him that sent me whilst it is Day.* And this he assures us of, Chap. xvii. 4. *I have glorified thee on the Earth: I have finished the Work which thou gavest*

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gavest me to do. He began early to execute his Father's Business, *Luke* ii. 42, and continued in it to the Period of his Days. All our Lord's Time was spent in his imposed Work. He was like a Lamp lighted up, and that consumes itself in the Service of others. He did the Will of his Father without Interruption, *Luke* xxi. 37, 38. *In the Day-time he was teaching in the Temple, and at Night went out and abode in the Mount of Olives; and all the People came early in the Morning to hear him.* Thus was he the most accurate Redeemer and Improver of his Time; and as the chief Shepherd, so the great and first Labourer of all in the Vineyard of the Lord. How many set not about the important Affair of Life till late, and many not at all, and leave their Work undone when they leave the World.

3. HE left the World as a Stranger and Sojourner in it, as one that retir'd out of a strange Country to a better. He was the Head and Leader of all the sojourning Race of Believers; and tho' he was Heir of this lower, (as well as the upper World, *Heb.* i. 2.) yet he made no Claim to it. He calls himself a Stranger to the World, *John* xvii. 16. *I am not of the World;* and he was treated and used accordingly. Whilst he was here he was from Home, as all the Saints are; and he and they are conform'd in this, as in other things, that both look'd for a better Country, *Heb.* xi. 16. So that his leaving the World was but acting the Part of a Stranger, and going to his Home, to his Father's House. When he left it, it was as an unkind World, that us'd him hardly, slew him, and turn'd him out of it, *Mat.* xxi. 39. They cast him out of the Vineyard, so barbarous was the World to him. It was his Communion with his Father and with

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Heaven that sweetned his Pilgrimage on Earth, and allay'd the Bitternes of it. Oh that as he was, so we might be in the World!

4. He left the World willingly and readily. The Expression in the Text notes the Voluntariness of the Act; *I leave the World*. His whole Stay below was irksome to him, save that he had the Work of our Redemption to accomplish. He came willingly into it, *Ps. xl. 6.* and with the like Desire he quitted and left it. His Time and Glass run slowly in his own Apprehension, till he was return'd to his Father, got to Heaven again, and reinstated in those Felicities and Glories he had divested himself of for our Sakes. Most are afraid to have a Call Home; but his was welcome to him: There seems to be a Strain of Pleasure couch'd in those Words, *John xiii. 1. When Jesus knew that his Hour was come, that he should depart out of the World to his Father.* True, he shrunk at his approaching Passion; but that was in part from a Sense of his Father's Displeasure, as well as from a Dread of Death.

5. He quitted the World with Forethoughts and Foresight of his Departure, and with compleat Preparations for a better. He had the Passage from this to the other World much in his Eye and upon his Heart, as we have already observ'd. His Life on Earth was a Living upon Heaven. His Kingdom is heavenly; his Doctrine and Laws heavenly; and his Life, Designs, and Ends, were the same: Yea, Heaven was the Center of all his Motions: He carried a Heaven in him, and along with him; and his Heart and Eyes were never taken off it: And his Followers in this, as in other Things, should be like him. To act his Part well as Mediator,

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tor, to glorify his Father here, and return again to him in Heaven, were the great Points he had in his Eye, and mostly look'd at. How prepared did he make and keep himself for going thither: He was full of Grace and all heavenly Excellencies, compleatly furnish'd for that blest World.

6. He left the World as a great Benefactor to it; as one that had enrich'd it with his Blessings, Goodness and Benefactions: The Beams of his Benignity spread further than those of the Sun, *Acts x. 38.* *He went up and down doing good.* He fill'd the Country of *Judea*, the Sphere and Orb of his Motions, with Blessings, Miracles, and Acts of Bounty; preaching Salvation to a lost World; opening the Way to eternal Happiness; and, before he left it, purchas'd Blessings, abiding and everlasting Ones for it, and that at the Expence of his own Life, and becoming a Sacrifice for it, obtaining Remission and Reconciliation with a displeased God for perishing Sinners. Never was there, nor could be, such an Instance of Benefactions in any, no not in all Ages since the Foundation of the World, as his were. Many go out of the World leaving their evil Deeds behind 'em, and making Places worse; but our Lord Redeemer has put it into a Capacity of becoming a happy One.

7. He left it with full Assurance of Glory: He tells us so in his last Prayer to his Father, *John xvii. 13. And now come I to thee*; and in Verse 5. *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self.* His Faith and Expectation of future Glory was built upon his antient Right that he had from Everlasting, as the Son of God, and Heir of Glory; upon his Father's Promise

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to him; together with the Performance of the Work he came into the World to finish, and which he has faithfully executed. Never did Vessel go with greater Expectation and fuller Sail into the Harbour; never was any Motion more direct and vigorous, than that of our Lord's was, towards Heaven.

IN such a Manner, and more abundantly so, did he leave this, and go to a better World. Oh blessed and glorious Pattern for all his Saints and Followers to write after! Who would not be ambitious to leave it, and go to Heaven in such a Manner?

II. Second General. To consider this great Point with respect to the Disciples of Christ: Shew how we should leave the World, and our Duty thereabout.

THIS being a Subject of a complex Nature, the best Way to answer it may be by casting it into the following Enquiries:

1. CONSIDER after what Manner we should leave the World?
2. WHAT Change this will make upon us?
3. What we shall be when we leave the World?
3. WHAT we shall then enter upon? With the Issues and Consequences of going hence?

To the First, After what Manner we should leave the World?

WE must conceive differently, or have different Conceptions of our Lord's leaving the World, and going to Heaven; and of our leaving it, and entering upon another State. What he speaks of himself, That he came forth from the Father, and came into the World, and of leaving it, and going to him, must be limited to, and understood

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understood of his humane Nature, and not of his Deity or divine Nature; for in that respect he cannot be said to make a local Removal, because it is every where, unless we understand it of its Manifestations, and Operations on the humane Nature; and say that it is here and there, according to, and as it worketh in this or the other Place, in Heaven or on Earth: But now we, either as to our Souls and Bodies, or both, may be said properly to leave one State and World, and pass into another. I would hence take occasion to establish us in the Belief of a future State: When we lose our Visibility and Appearance in this World, we retain our Existence and Being. The sensitive Creatures, when they cease to be here, are no more for ever; but 'tis otherways with Man: He is in this respect like the heavenly Luminaries, which, when they disappear and set in one Hemisphere, rise and shine in another. Even so 'tis with us: We are no sooner withdrawn or removed from our Stations in this World, but we make our Appearance, and are consign'd to our Places and Posts in another; are no sooner raced out from the List of the Living, but have a Room appointed us amongst Spirits. But to come more directly to the Point.

I. We should consider whose World this is we are in; what Part we have acted; and how we have behaved ourselves in it. As God placed *Adam* in Paradise to dress it; so has he in like manner sent us with a Commission into the World. So that seeing this is his World that we find ourselves in, is it not proper to enquire and say, What Part have I acted in it, a wise or foolish, an intelligent or ignorant, a pious or an ungodly Part? Have I used the Talents

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Talents and Advantages God has given me, or not? Have I been serious or trifled? Done good or hurt in the World? What Sins have I committed? What Duties have I perform'd? What Honour or Dishonour have I brought to my gracious Preserver? Wherein have I benefited or damnified my Soul? Have I acted such a Part in the World as others do, or a better? What do I find done amiss or wrong, and what have I done that's right? All antecedent Actions have an Influence and Conducement one Way or other upon our Departure out of the World, either to the making it safe and comfortable, or dangerous and miserable. So that according as we can make Answers, have acted agreeably or dissonantly hereunto, are we fit or unfit to leave it, and to enter upon another.

2. LEAVING the World in a right or wrong Manner consists in the Performance and Execution of the Work appointed us, or in the Neglect and Omission of it. We may all say as our Lord, *John ix. 4.* that we have a Work to do; *must work the Work of him that sent us.* The very Constitution and Frame of Man shews he has some Work appointed him. If the inferior Creatures have Business in the World, much more must we suppose it so as to the superior and nobler Ones. A Time of Trial for an everlasting State, sufficiently imports and bespeaks us to have Work of the greatest Consequence upon us. They that will grant that this Life is in order to that to come, must necessarily own, that great Burdens of Duty lie upon us. Now the Work that we have to do comprehends these Things following. 1. The Glory, Service and Obedience we owe, and are to render to God. The whole Creation, or the Creation in general,

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general, is erected for his Honour, and this is the Office of particular Beings in it. Now this great Duty of glorifying God branches forth itself into many Particulars. There's an honouring of him in his Perfections, his Attributes and Works, and in the Revelations and Manifestations he has made of himself unto us in his Word, his Laws, and the Sanctions of 'em, the Rewards and Threatnings he has enforc'd and back'd 'em withal, making him the great End, yea the *Alpha* and *Omega* of our Actions, Intentions and Purposes, together with all inward Acts of Fear, Reverence, Love, and others of the like Kind.

2. Executing the great Work of our Salvation, *Phil. ii. 12.* getting our Natures renew'd, and the divine Image restor'd in us, *Eph. iv. 23.* the Acquisition of Grace, and being exercis'd in the Practice of the Duties of Religion and Godliness, together with the further carrying on and perfecting this great Affair, and being exercis'd herein to the End of our Lives: The Business of our Salvation is a Concern of great Copiousness and Multiplicity, and should be pursued in all the Parts of it. This is Work that must be done before we leave the World, or we shall be found very unfit for a Removal out of it.

3. It comprises all Acts and Duties of Righteousness, Goodness, Mercy, and Usefulness, to others, that our Capacities and divine Providence calls us to the Performance of. These Duties we may call the Secondary Branches and Parts of Godliness. Now the two foregoing Articles, with this last mention'd, are the great Matters we are commission'd to perform and execute. This is the Argument Christ uses upon his own Account, *John xvii.*

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4. 5. *I have finished the Work which thou gavest me to do : And then adds, And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self. And that of the Apostle, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. is like unto it ; I have fought a good Fight, —— Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness.* So that we may see, that they that have been exercis'd in these Things, and perform'd well, may leave the World in Peace and Comfort : But those that have neglected their Duty to God, been careless of their precious Souls, and have left the Work of their Salvation undone, have cause to fear and tremble under their Removal out of it.

3. We should rectify the Mistakes and Errors we have made in the World, and get cleansed of the Stains and Defilements we have contracted during our Abode in it ; the Sins we have committed, pardoned. This World being of so vitiating and contaminating a Nature, and its Corruptions and Taints so universal, we have great reason to suspect and question ourselves hereabouts ; nay, may conclude we have partaked of its Pollutions. Hitherto our Lord's Prayer for his Apostles refers, John xvii. 15, that God would keep 'em from the Evil of the World. So that our great Business and Work should be to get these expunged and wiped out before we go hence, and better Lines drawn upon us instead thereof, or otherways we are not fit to leave the World. Now these Errors and Defilements fall under a threefold Consideration. 1. Those that are directly acted against God himself, immediately reflect upon him. Now all of this Kind we should get blotted out and pardon'd, through the great Sacrifice and Atonement, the Lord Redeemer ; and thereby get into a State of Reconciliation with him ;

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him; and carry the Sense of our Sins upon us through the World, as a grievous and intolerable Burden: And how sad it is to dye in the contrary State, in our Sins, Christ told the Jews, *John viii. 21.* 2. As to others: Where we have done wrong we should make Reparation, and forgive those that have injured us; *Mat. vi. 12.* *Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors;* and to give all their Rights and Dues, *Rom. xiii. 7.* Observable is that of *Zacharias*, *Luke xv.* 8. *If I have taken any thing from any Man, I restore him fourfold.* Justice and Righteousness is one of the great Rules and Precepts of our holy Religion. 3. As to ourselves: All that we have done by any Ways corrupting ourselves, by our Intemperance, in gratifying and indulging our fleshly Appetites, using our Souls and Bodies, the one or both as Instruments of Sin and Iniquity; these Contaminations and Filthinesses we should get purified, *2 Cor. vii. 1.* and come under a religious Government of our whole Man; *Deny Ungodliness, and live soberly, righteously, and godly*, *Tit. ii. 11, 12.* These are some of the Ingredients and Requisites to the Leaving the World aright. Surely those that make so great a Change had need to be undefiled and unspotted Ones: And certainly to leave it with these Errors uncross'd, and upon the Score, and with these Stains upon us, is one Way of leaving it in a wrong Manner. How many, to their Shame, leave their evil Deeds and evil Examples alive, as we may say, behind 'em? We should be like those that act a Part upon the Stage; who, if they have made some Faults in their first Scenes, endeavour to amend 'em in managing better in the concluding Ones. And this is one of the Advantages of Time and Old

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Old Age, that Persons are capable thereby of rectifying the Errors of the former Part of their Lives, and consequently of leaving the World as they ought to do. Tho' we have brought Sin with us into the World, and suffer'd the Defilements of it to cleave unto us, yet we should take nothing of it out with us. They may leave it in greatest Peace and Comfort, that are wash'd the cleanest from the Effects of it; and take the least of its Image, of its Sentiments and Practices, with 'em into the future State.

4. IN being qualified for leaving this present World; or destitute and in the Want of Requisites for it. It is not enough to get the Pollution of the World taken away; but there must be Lines of Holiness laid upon us, some peculiar Qualifications, before we can be meet for so great a Change; and they that want 'em, will be found unfit for it. This will be taken for granted with most. There's a going naked and unfurnish'd out of this State, and a leaving it with necessary Furniture and Requisites for it: There's spiritual Cloathing and Ornaments, as well as corporal Ones; and these should be sought after whilst we are in this World. We have a Summary of these, *Rev. iii. 18.* Gold tried in the Fire, White Raiment, and Eye-Salve; the Graces of the holy Spirit, the Righteousness of Christ, Faith, Love, Repentance, Holiness, New Obedience. But of these we may speak more afterwards: Hitherto we may apply that Text, *2 Cor. v. 3.* *If so be that being cloathed, we shall not be found naked.* The Apostle speaks of it with a great Dread, intimating to us, that it is a sad thing to be found in such a Condition. None can dye with Comfort, and appear before God with Confidence, if they be not cloath'd with

with Christ's Righteousness. A wicked Man hath no Garment to cover him ; but for the Righteous, God puts one Grace upon another ; upon the Righteousness of Christ he puts on the Sanctification of the Spirit, and upon that he puts on the Robes of Glory.

We might enlarge under this Head by subjoining hereunto the following Considerations.

1. We should exercise a great Concern and Fear at this Time, lest we should miscarry in the important Affair of our Salvation ; lest all that we have done herein prove wrong and defective at last. We should be full of Enquiries, Debates, and Examinations of ourselves ; look much into the State of our Souls ; and endeavour to rectify and set every Thing at rights in us, with respect to the World we are entring upon. Our Fears and Hopes hereabouts should be ballanc'd and compar'd, and we shoulo observe which Part preponderates, weighs down the other, and has the strongest Arguments on its Side. This is such Counsel as the Apostle gives, 2 *Phil.* ii. 12. to work out our *Salvation with Fear and Trembling* : And, *Heb.* iv. 1. he bids us fear, lest a Promise being left us of entring into Rest, any of us should come short of it. We should advance herein, and clear Matters of this Kind gradually ; bring our Case to a Probability, and pursue it till it come to a settled Peace and Satisfaction, and carry it on towards a Certainty. If the Concern of our Salvation be pendulous and doubtful when we are taking Leave of the World, it will create Perplexities in an Hour when all Things should be bright and clear about us. But then, if, on the other Hand, we have no Cogitations or Workings in us about such Things, we have reason

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reason to suspect we are unfit to leave the World.

2. WITH the most accurate Reveiws and suitable Reflections upon our past Lives. This is another necessary Ingredient to the leaving of the World. At this Season then we should, as is usual in other Cases, sum up all, cast up the Total of our Lives and Actions at the Foot of our spiritual Account ; make a narrow Scrutiny into our Duties, Conversations, Words, and Behaviours, and consider how we have performed and managed in the several Stages of Life that we have past through. We should consider the various Providences and Dispensations that have occur'd, and we have been exercised with, whilst we have been in the Wilderness ; or, in Scripture Stile, *in the Times that have past over us*, 1 Chron. xxix. 30. and how, and whether we have improv'd 'em : What Use we have made of our spiritual Privileges, Sabbaths, Ordinances, and other Mercies : What Encrease of our Talents, or what we have gain'd by trading, Luke xix. 15. When we are approaching to our Judge, it's seafonable, as a Preparative thereunto, to examine and judge ourselves ; that we may not be judged and condemned, 1 Cor. xi. 31. But then on the other Hand, a Carelesness and Neglect hereabouts, gives our Case an ill Aspect, and makes it look dangerous.

3. WE should leave the World with a Repetition and Renewal of the essential and practical Acts of Godliness : Tho' we have been much exercised in these in our Life-time, yet in our last Seasons they are of chief Importance, Necessity, and great Advantage to us. Some of these are mention'd before, and are obvious almost

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almost to all, yet it may not be amiss to name them; as, Humiliation, Repentance, Faith in Christ, and upon Things invisible, Acts of predominant Love to God and heavenly Objects, the Renewal of the Covenant of Christianity with the Blessed Trinity; the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. These, with other Acts of Godliness of a like Nature, should be repeated, and gone over again and again: And such a Method as this would be of great Use upon various Accounts: Such a Practice would manifest the Sincerity of our Hearts and Graces, give us the Evidence of them, and tend to the perfecting of them, and bring in Satisfaction and Comfort thereupon: We shouold swim and sail through such Waters to Heaven. A precious Soul exercis'd in this manner cannot fail of meeting with Acceptance: But then on the other Hand, to dye and leave the World in the Neglect, and without the Exercise of these, may justly raise many Doubts in us about our future Happiness.

4. We shouold leave the World as mortified to, and Conquerors of it; after the Manner of our Blessed Lord. All our Affections and Appetites should be wholly drawn off and call'd in from it. It should be a *Nebuſtān*, 2 Kings xviii. 4. a Thing we can find no Pleasure and Delight in: The Ungodly dye as Slaves of the World, but a Believer as a Conqueror. As we are Christians, we have a threefold Enemy, the Fleſh, the World, and the Devil; and consequently should be Victors in all these Respects: Christ told his Apostles for their Comfort, that he had overcome the World, *John* xvi. 33. intimating thereby to them, that they must endeavour to follow his Example, and imitate him therein:

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therein. The Belief and Prospect of such a glorious World as is before us, should create an holy Triumph in us over this we are taking our Leave of.

5. WITH a Sense and great Regard to that great Change, the everlasting State, we are at the Door of, and entring upon. An ordinary change of Life raises many Thoughts in us; But how much more should so great a one, one that's endless, do so? The future State should dwell much upon our Minds in every Stage of Life, but especially in our last. The nearer we approach to it, so much the more sensible we should be of it. As our Lord's Departure drew on, so much the more frequently does he touch upon that String. If others be so bold and hardy as to rush upon it without Consideration, yet this will not justify our Neglect and Forgetfulness of it. What a commanding powerful Subject should this, of the future State, be to us! How small and light are other Matters, when laid in the Ballance with this! Oh! venture not into another World, without many, without serious and deep Cogitations of it. It cannot be supposed there can be a Preparation for it, but in such a Method.

To sum up the whole. These are some of the Qualifications and Requisites necessary for leaving this present World. We proceed to the

5. LEAVING the World in a wrong or right Manner consists in Understanding the great Subject of Death, and being much exercis'd in dying Work and Practises, or living in the Neglect thereof. Now this comprehends several Things: As,

1. THAT we form and get right Conceptions of Death. Now there are these following Considerations

siderations of it. 1. It may be consider'd as a Punishment due for our first Transgression in *Adam*, as inflicted for the Breach of the Covenant of Innocency, and as it is moderated in the second Covenant, lenified by the Promise and Death of the Lord Redeemer, as unstung and conquer'd by him, and made a Messenger of Good to the Godly: Or, as a bitter Potion; that is, by Consequence of great and sovereign Virtue. 2. It may be conceiv'd of in a natural Sense, as it dissolves the vital, intimate Union, breaks the Bonds and Ties betwixt the Soul and Body; and, in a spiritual Sense, as it's a Means to bring the Godly to everlasting Blessedness: 3. As to what it is to an Eye of Sense, and what it is to an Eye of Faith, as look'd upon singly and alone, and with its alleviating Concomitants, as having Heaven and the Hopes of Glory annexed unto it. Thus it was with *David* in *Psa. xvi. 9, 10.* *My Flesh also shall rest in Hope; for thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell.* And thus it was with Christ himself, as is evident by the Apostle Peter's Application of those Words to him in *Acts ii. 26, 27.* These Considerations make a great Alteration in the Subject before us; in the former Respects it's awful, and looks very black; in the latter it's qualified, and it's Bitternes allay'd and corrected. Now we should endeavour that it may be such to us. Unarm'd, unstung, enfeebled, and conquer'd, and having its Power taken from it. Many look upon it with a general View without any distinct Considerations of it.

2. THE Preparations that should be made for it; laying up something in Store, putting on the Armour of God against that Time, or getting into the State and Condition, that it will be

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then proper to be found in ; and if it find us thus harness'd, it cannot pierce us with its Darts. We have spoken of the Qualifications for leaving the World, we'll avoid falling in with what has been observ'd before. How much, and under what Allusions our Saviour has spoken upon this Subject, *viz.* of a Preparation, is obvious to those that are conversant in their Bibles. It's represented to us under the Metaphor of a Wedding, or Servants waiting for the Return of their Masters, Mat. xxiv. 42, 43, 45. Luke xii. 35, 36. *Let your Loyns be girt about, and your Lamps burning, &c.* Now a Preparation for Death, or the Want of it, may be judg'd of several Ways.

1. By the Laws and Rules provided for that Purpose. This is what the Gospel declares in that Case, which contains the Terms and Conditions of Life and Death, of Salvation and Condemnation. This Gospel, or new Covenant, we may call the great Law, and Charter of Life and Death; so that they that have the Gospel Requisites, perform'd the Conditions of it, have an Earnest of Glory and everlasting Blessedness, and may expect a Consignment thereunto. There are the Beginnings of a worked Preparation in Persons, which lie in a Renovation of the Soul and its Faculties, a new Nature, Holiness of Heart and Life, with other Concomitants of that Sort. And there's the Progress, Advances, and Increases of them, growing up in these Things, and obtaining greater Measures and Degrees of them. The Stock of our Preparations for leaving the World should rise to more and more.

2. We may take an Estimate of our Preparations for going hence, by comparing ourselves with Heaven. If we be like and meet for a better World, have the Qualifications that open the Door

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Door to it, we may conclude upon a Reception thither: But if we have not, carry no Resemblance thereunto, we must certainly be excluded; even as if we have any of the Badges of Hell upon us, it's a sad Symptom we shall be awarded thither. Heaven is a holy World, and the Company and Employments of it are high and sacred, and there must be an Answerableness in us thereunto, before we can arrive there, something of it in our Souls before we attain it.

To sum up what we have said: That Person then that has perform'd the Requisites of the Gospel, has the Conditions of Salvation wrought and begun in him; something done upon him that is like to Heaven, and makes him like thereunto; and carries these Badges and Resemblances, and encreases them; that leaves the Body and the present State so qualified, as those were that are now in Glory; that is, so related to God and Christ as they were; has those Graces, those spiritual Ornaments and Cloathing as they had. Such, I say, may be reckoned and accounted prepared for going out of the Body, and of being received to Blessedness.

3. **T**HAT we live suitably and agreeably to a dying Time and dying Work; do all Things in a Congruity to our latter End, in a Correspondence thereunto, and as may harmonize with it; that we abstain from whatsoever disagrees with it, and will be found to render it dreadful to us; and that we draw all the Lines of our Actions and Duties so, as may center in it. All our Actions have an Influence the one Way or other upon it. We are in our whole Lives making our sick and dying Beds either comfortable or uncomfortable, easy or painful to

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us. When Death comes, it revives and brings to our View all that we have done, lays it open before us, and then we begin to feel the Virtue of it, either in Joy or Sorrow. Oh! the Accuracy of Life and Actions, the Circumspection and Watchfulness, the Spirituality and Purity that should be exercised, in order to the making all coherent and agreeable to our last Hours. In short, they that have drawn no Lines, or but few, that lye cross unto it, and the main of what they have done is square thereunto, may leave the World comfortably, or however with Safety. May all that we do then have such a happy Tendency; be a Comment upon this great Season, that we may make our Appeal to God as *Hezekiah* did, *Isa. xxxviii. 3.* *Remember now, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a perfect Heart.*

4. THAT we conclude and close our Days and Lives with the best Works and Actions, and that are likest and nearest a-kin to Heaven; leave the World thankfully, and dye full of Blessings and Praises, in the great Sense of what God hath done for us in our Pilgrimage State and Condition; rememboring in what a Way of Love he has led us; the gracious Conduct he has vouchased us; what Fears, Dangers and Temptations, he has in part prevented and delivered us from; how seasonably he has relieved and brought us out of Distress; and how his Goodness, Mercy and Benignity, has overflowed us. We may conceive what is the most proper to be our last and dying Work, by the Examples of Christ and the Saints to that Purpose. When *Jacob* was going to dye, he calls his Sons to him, and blesses them, *Gen. iv. 9.* Thus when *Moses* was going up into the Mount to dye

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dye there, he blesses the Twelve Tribes. And our Lord's last Work on Earth was blessing his Apostles, *Luke xxiv. 50, 51. And he led them out as far as to Bethany; and he lift up his Hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven.* The nearer the Saints come to that blessed Country, what can they be so fitly exercised in as the Work of that World? Let this then be your Work and Practice, according to the Advancements and Approaches you are making towards it. Certainly no Soul can miss reaching the blessed State, or fall short of it, that is taken up with, and exercised in that blessed Work. And this brings us to the

Second Enquiry. What Change the leaving the World will make upon us? What we shall be when we leave it?

THIS is a Subject that claims room in this Discourse. In the little Accidents of Life that occur and befall us, there's some Changes made upon us; How much more remarkable Ones, may we suppose, befall us in our leaving one World, and passing into another? This is a Matter that surely it becomes us to get an Understanding of, and be affected with.

1. IN this State and Conjunction of Things there will be a Separation made betwixt us and many Enjoyments, a breaking up and putting a Period to the Concomitants of the present Condition: All worldly Ties will be dissolved and broken asunder. We may enumerate a few.
1. There will be a relative Separation made. The Bonds that have tied Relations together will be broken. *Matt. xxii. 30. In the Resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in Marriage.* These are then broken asunder, and none spared,

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(tho' never so near and close) even as Sampson did his Withs, or as a Thread that touches the Fire. Those of Husbands and Wives, of Parents and Children, are of no Force, cannot hold at that Time. When we quit the World, there's a Line of Distinction, a Veil drawn betwixt us and all such Enjoyments. 2. A Separation as to worldly Possessions, those of Estates, Riches, Honours, Pleasure, &c. These, and all such Lights, are blown out by Death: We cannot carry them along with us, but must leave them behind us. The Rich and Poor, when they have left the World, are then made equal, *Prov. xxii. 2.* In that State there is no Difference betwixt Persons on the Account of outward Things. The most spacious Lordships, most sumptuous Palaces, the richest Titles of Honour, and whatever else can be mention'd of that Kind; these will sink, and are lost in that Hour. Death strips off the rich Man's Purple, and the poor Man's Rags, and sends all away naked, *Job i. 21.* 3. It carries us from all humane Converse and Society, whether civil or religious. The Meditations of Hezekiah are of this sort, *Isa. xxxviii. 11.* *I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the Land of the Living: I shall behold Man no more with the Inhabitants of the Earth.* And hereunto tends that of *Job vi. 8.* *The Eye of him that has seen me shall see me no more.* To the same Purpose saith an holy Man, *When I dye, I must depart, not only from sensual Delights, but from the more manly Pleasures of my Studies, Knowledge, and Converse with wise and godly Men; and from all my Pleasure in Reading, Hearing, and publick and private Exercises of Religion.* *I must no more come amongst the Living, nor see the Faces of my faithful Friends, nor be seen of Man.*

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Man. *Houses, Cities, Fields and Countries, Gardens and Walks, will be as nothing to me.* 4. It will be a leaving the Body, quitting the Tene-ment and Possession of it. This the Apostle Peter, 2 Epist. i. 14. calls putting off our Ta-bernacle: That we shall no longer dwell in Cot-tages of Clay. The Body in its present State is a gross, passive Vehicle, that only serves us for our Residence on Earth, and after is laid aside as useless, and unfit to that we enter upon. What is agreeable to another State, we carry away with us; and what is not, we lay down and leave behind us. When Persons are taken to Court, they lay by their Rags and ordinary Cloathing; even such is the Cloathing of Body, that must in like manner be then put off. But grant this to be so: Tho' we leave these and much more behind us; yet if God do not leave or depart from us, and we leave not him, it matters not; for he'll be instead of all, yea in-finitely better than all to us: Make sure of him, and then you'll want nothing.

2. THERE will be a modal Change of our Beings when we leave the World: Then we shall have a different Being from what we now have. We shall lay down our Bodies, but shall lose nothing of real Existence and Being; and by putting off this Part, we shall commence sepa-rated Souls or Spirits, be uncompounded and simple Ones. The laying aside our Bodies will be no Loss to us, but rather a Benefit and Ad-vantage; for this, together with our Entrance upon a new State, will tend to the Advance-ment of our Faculties and Capacities, con-duce to an Amplitude and Enlargement of our Understandings, give us great Acuteness and Quickness of Sensation. What can we think

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think can be more intelligent, active and operative, than those Souls that have left this dark World, and are got into one of Light. When Spirits are entred amongst such Beings, and have such for their Company, it's a great Help to their Operation and Exercises. Whilst the Soul is in the Body, it's pent up; but when set at Liberty, it's like a Bird let loose, and that takes its Flight, and soars and moves whither, and as its Nature carries it. To be in a corporeal World is not near so suitable to spiritual Beings, as to be with those that are a Kin, and have a Simularness and Likeness to them. These, with more Advantages that lye out of our Sight at present, make departed Souls be as if they had new Powers given them. When we are call'd into another World, we are fitted to entertain the Joys or Miseries of that State, and suitably affected with them: There the Souls of Men will be more highly Passive, and more abundantly Active; capable of receiving much and of exerting themselves in greater Operations. What a great Sense do we find *Dives* had got of Joys and Sorrows, Happiness and Misery, after he had left this Life? as to which he was stupid and ignorant of before, *Luke* xvi. 23, 24. This World then where we now are, is, as we may say, a dead State and World; but that to come will be one of greatest Life, whether Heaven or Hell. In short, in such a manner as this are all acting that are gone hence; and we shall be the same when we come into the other State.

3. BESIDES meer and simple Being, there will be several Things we shall take along with us out of the World. Now these are the Habits, Dispositions and Qualities, that we have contracted in this Life, and will cleave unto, and remain

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remain upon us, when we put off the Body. True, there are many Things that hang loosely upon us, which will fall off, and not accompany us into another State, of which we have mention'd some before; but there are others that are inseparably united to us, which we shall not be divested of. As for Example: Vertues and Vices, good and bad Qualities, holy and sinful ones. Some Souls go out of the Body enrich'd, and some impoverish'd; some with spiritual Ornaments, and some naked and void thereof; some with celestial and angelical Qualities, and others with satanical ones; either with Preparations for another World, or unprepared for it; Such as these are contracted and infus'd in this Lite. By the sanctifying Operations of the holy Spirit on the Souls of Persons, and by holy Exercises, they are endow'd with holy Qualities; and by sinful sensual Lives and Practices, the Souls of others are vitiated, corrupted, and diseased, and become sensual, sinful and unholy; and these they carry away with them, when they leave the Body. Thus the covetous Person carries the Love of the World, and the Drunkard the Brand of that Sin upon him into the other Life. And the same we may say of other Sinners, such a Difference as this there is upon Souls when they enter upon another State. These are Truths that cannot be contested or gainsay'd, and therefore what Diligence should we use that we be sanctified Persons, and go not naked, without Christ, his Grace and Righteousness, into another State; but furnish'd with the Riches and Blessings of the new Covenant, those which eternal Life and Happiness turn upon; and that we get all worldly Filth, all that's sinful and unholy, taken away from us, and

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and leave not the World with any of these upon us; for we shall find it very sad to carry any such along with us out of it.

CONSONANT to what we have been saying speaks a worthy Author. 'The Habits of Grace, which by Regeneration are here implanted in a weak and imperfect Soul, go with it to Glory, where they exert themselves in a more high and perfect Way of acting than ever they did here below. In vain is all the Work of the Spirit upon us in this World, if we carry it not along with us into the next, seeing all his Works upon us in this Life have a Respect and Relation to the Life to come.'

THE Things foregoing then are Matters of highest Importance, and our chiefest Care should be laid out about them; should, above all others, be minded, and cannot be neglected but with greatest Hazard and Damage. It's of great Concernment what we are, in a spiritual Sense, at all times; but especially when we are changing our State and Place of Residence, passing from one World to another, from a transitory to a permanent and eternal One. Many know something of their Being whilst they are here; but how little do they understand what they shall be hereafter?

Third Enquiry. What we shall enter upon when we leave the World? With the Issues and Consequences of going hence?

WHEN Persons are for entring upon a new Habitation or Country, they are inclined to think how it will go with them in it. Why the like should we do; and much more so in the present Case. They that know they must dwell here no longer, will, or should be, making Provision for a Dwelling elsewhere. How careleſs are those

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those that will not ask themselves the Question, Where must I dwell ? or, What shall I be in the World I am going to ?

1. ALL are disposed of, and dealt with hereafter, according to what they are when they go hence. It is not what we have been, but what we are, when our Change comes on and approaches. This is the Rule that the Judge of the World acts by in the Designation and Appointment of Persons to their eternal States. The Measures of Judgment are unalterably settled. One unfit, unprepared Soul, shall not go to Heaven; nor any one that is prepared for it, be put by, and fall short of it.

THE future Judgment wholly respects and looks back upon a Life and Time of Trial; what we have done in the Body, 2 Cor. v. 10. The State in which we have had Means and Advantages for our Salvation, Helps to bring us to Heaven. It is his Gifts, Talents and Mercies, that we shall be examined about; and therefore we have the greatest Reason to be the most accurate Managers and Improvers of them.

2. THE future World is of a quite different Nature to this we are in: This is known, and lies open to our View; the other is known in Part, and vail'd in Part: The one is an Object of Sense; the other of Faith, and is represented to us in Terms proper, Metaphors, Allusions, &c. This present State and that carry the like Resemblance, as the Rivers and the Sea, or Ocean, do to one another. Rivers are Emblems of Time, are always flowing, running away and changing; even so is this World, and Man in it. The Ocean is a Shadow of Eternity; and the Rivers running into, and being lost in it, fitly represents the Motions of Mankind, shews us whither he is

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is tending, and that as they are lost and swallow'd up in the Sea, so will Man be in the Ocean of Eternity; which is the common Receptacle of Souls. Here we have our Being successively, Generation after Generation, *Eccles.* i. 3. But hereafter they all meet together, and there take up their eternal Residence, good and holy ones, and bad and unholy ones, apart and distinguish'd by themselves. This and the future State differ much in their Uses, and the Work that the Inhabitants have severally assign'd them; in the one our Work is resembl'd by the sowing of Seed, the other falls under the Notion of a Harvest, or reaping Time; *Gal.* vi. 7, 8. where we enjoy the Fruits of our Labours, reap the Crop we have here sown; a Crop of Happiness or Misery, of Joys or Sorrows. Here infinite Goodness, Grace and Patience, is exhibited. In Heaven glorious Grace and Love are in their fullest Manifestations, and reign; but in Hell the Power, Justice, and Wrath of God, are exercised in the most terrible and awful Manner. Oh that I could give you some Insight into, and some Knowledge and Acquaintance with this State in both the Branches of it! To be leaving one World and going into another, and to be ignorant of it, must needs be accounted very dangerous, and is chargeable with gross Negligence and Carelessness.

3. THE Issues and Consequences of leaving the World will be everlasting Happiness, or everlasting Misery. The Scriptures of Truth assure us, that God will render to all according to their Qualifications and Works; *Rev.* xx. 13. *And the Dead were judged out of those Things which were written in the Books, according to their Works.* *John v. 29.* --- *And shall come forth, they*

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they that have done good, to the Resurrection of Life ; and they that have done evil, to the Resurrection of Damnation. Matth. xxv. 46. And these shall go into everlasting Punishment, and the Righteous into Life eternal. There are two States before us that are vastly different, and this Life is the Time of our Probation for them ; so that as we manage here, we shall meet with a Distribution accordingly.

Of such great Moment and Consequence it is, how we leave this World, and enter upon another. Such a Separation and Distinction there will be made betwixt those that act a good Part and conclude aright, and those that act a contrary One. This is what all have found and met with, and what others shall find in their Day. Actors, if they perform well, have only a short Applause or Shout, a Crown of Bays or Laurel ; and if wrong, meet with an Hiss or Scorn that is soon over : But in the Case before us it is far otherways : Here the Consequences will be eternal ; no less than everlasting Happiness, or everlasting Misery. Let this then startle us, and make us begin to act another Part ; to make it our Business to go off the Stage of this World in a right Manner.

Thus we have considered this great Point of leaving the World in these three Particulars, *viz.* After what Manner we should leave it ; what Change this will make upon us ; and what we shall be when we leave it : And what we shall then enter upon ; with the Issues and Consequences of going hence. From which we go on to the

III. Third General. THAT in our Meditations of leaving the World, (in Imitation of our Blessed

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sed Lord) we should haye our Eyes terminated upon Heaven ; going to, and enjoying a heavenly Father.

WE have been hitherto conversant in the Shades and Darknesses of leaving and departing out of this World ; but now the Light begins to break forth about us ; the joyful Beams of Heaven, and a Father in Heaven, to encompass us.

THIS Way did our Saviour direct his Heart and Eyes, as we have already observed : He did not say only, And now I leave, or depart out of the World ; but he pointed at the Happiness he had before him ; the Fruition of his heavenly Father in Glory ; and what he should enjoy in and with him. Upon this his Eye was fix'd, and his Heart and Affections placed ; and so it should be with all his Followers. How dark a Prospect is that of the future State, if the Consideration of Heaven and its Happiness be left out, be not included ; but the Thoughts of it yield abundance of Light and Comfort. And this is the peculiar Privilege of Believers, that they can look up to Heaven, dart an Eye of Faith into it, with some comfortable Hopes of arriving there when they leave the World ; that they shall make so happy an Exchange, as when they shall depart from this, that they shall go to that blessed and better Country.

I. LOOKING at Heaven, when we think of leaving the World, will be of excellent Use to allay and suppress the Fears of Death, and a future State. We are liable and apt to be over-born with these great Matters ; but here is something that will moderate and check them : The Thoughts and Hopes of Heaven, and of a foreseen Happiness. This is a most proper Ingredient,

gredient, and of sovereign Use to correct and sweeten these bitter Waters. The Expectation of a Calm after a Storm, of a clear Day after a dark Night, does much to bear up the Spirits of Persons in such Cases. Why this is the Case before us. How many that are got to Heaven could be Witnesses to this Truth? Hereby the Sufferings of the primitive Christians were lightned and made tolerable, born up under all their Exercises; *Heb. x. 34.* *And took joyfully the spoiling of your Goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in Heaven.*---That it may be thus with us, we should clear up our Right to Heaven, act forth upon and keep it in our actual View, under the cloudy Times of Affliction and Death. And that would sustain and fortify us.

2. THE Thoughts of Heaven, and of a Heavenly Father there, will be Matter of Joy and Comfort, beget Springs of Consolation in the Soul. The Power of a foreseen Happiness is great and wonderful. The Virtues and Energies of heavenly Things dilate and extend themselves far and wide, like the Beams of the Sun; and will reach a gracious Soul in any Affliction, and dart Rays of Comfort into it. A looking up to Heaven has been the common Method of bringing in Support and Light into the Hearts of Believers, in all Exigencies. Thus when *Steven* was going to be stoned to death, he looked up to Heaven, and saw Jesus standing at the right Hand of God. This enabled him to endure the Storm, *Acts vii. 55, 56.* By this means Light was emitted into the darkest Prisons of the Martyrs and Confessors of Christ, and the Heat of their hottest Fires has been allayed and mitigated. Such Considerations

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will make the godly to meditate: 'I am bidding
adieu to a dark World, my Feet are dipping in
the Brim of the Waters of Death; I am going
out of a poor Cottage, but hope to exchange
it for a glorious Palace and House in the Hea-
vens, 2 Cor. v. 1, and to be received into the
Embraces of a heavenly Father, and enjoy
Communion with him for ever.'

3. THIS will do much to cure us of our
Unwillingness to leave the World, and create
Desires of a Departure. What is it that invites
us to another Country but the Excellency and
Enjoyments of it? that 'tis so much beyond and
and exceeds that we are at present in, and that
we shall be so much better there than we are
here. In far better Company, and in dearer
and choicer Embracements infinitely, than this
World can afford. And if so, surely we have
the strongest Invitations in the present Case to
be willing to quit it; for there is no such happy
Exchange to be made as parting with Earth
for Heaven. The Apostle's Desire to be remov'd
turn'd hereupon, Phil. i. 23. *having a Desire to
depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.*

4. HEAVEN is the great Point and Subject
of Centration, that on which we should rest and
center. All Lines should be drawn hereunto,
and meet here. This was the Center of our
blessed Lord, and should be so of all his Follow-
ers; and hither it is that he has directed us to
look, John xx. 17. *Go to my Brethren, and say
unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to
my God and your God.* What can our Lord's
Meaning in these choice Words be, but to fetch
our Eyes and Hearts up to Heaven, and keep
them there? A Christian is like Noah's Dove
fluctuating and restless till he comes to his Point,
casts

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casts Anchor here, and fixes upon this Rock: Whatever Turns or Motions we have in the World, yet all should meet here, Heaven and a God, yea, a Father and a Christ: There should be the Center of them all.

O H the Virtue and Power of heavenly Things! Who would not fix their Eyes upon that World? That they may draw down the Benefit of it into their own Hearts, to bear them up in the Hours of their Dissolution. What can be wanting then? but that we clear up our Right to it, make it ours, and then fix upon it, as we see our Lord here did.

AND now, that we may reap the Benefit of this great Truth, let us bring it home and closer to ourselves, in some such Reflections as these: 'Consider, O my Soul, the sweet Sense and full Meaning of these Words, a heavenly Father, and a Father in Heaven! Canst thou comprehend how great a Privilege this is? Can there be any Elixir and Cordial comparable hereunto? 'If all the Men on the Earth should enter into this Relation, and shew the Tenderness of a Father to thee; yet this is far more than that could amount unto. Come then and dart forth the Eye of Faith to this Father beyond the Flood of Affliction; shoot the Eye of Faith beyond Death, as *Jonathan* did his Arrows beyond the Lad; and this will not only help thee safe through *Jordan* into *Canaan*; but even divide those Waters, and cut thee a safe and easy Passage through them into that blessed Country. Why did thy Redeemer look towards him, but to fetch in Comfort and Support in his last Hours, and that he might be an Example and Pattern to thee in the like Case? Has he not told thee that he is thy Father also? Make use of him

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to the same Ends and Purposes, the Matter of thy Hopes, Joys, Consolation and Expectations. Upon these Wings thou mayst ride, and bear thyself up above the Clouds, towards the serene and unstormy Regions of everlasting Happiness.

THE fourth General is, That leaving the World is a Subject that should have our special Consideration.

But we shall wave the handling of this, and come to the

Vth and Last Head. THE Improvement of the Point.

1. BE caution'd; Oh take heed you do not leave the World in a wrong Manner! What great Need is there to get all to pause a while upon and consider this Point! There are so many Ways of missing it herein, that we cannot enumerate all of them; but, may be, the mentioning some of them may lead us to the Rest, and beget some Caution and Fear in us hereabouts.

[1.] THERE is a Leaving the World ignorantly and carelessly. Common Experience is a Witness of this. Multitudes live without the Thoughts, and dye ignorant of, and Strangers to it; to the Nature, Greatness and Importance of it. Let every one that reads this, shun this Rock.

[2.] THERE is a Leaving it upon bare Presumptions and false Hopes of Mercy. Many leave it with Expectations of Happiness that drop into Hell. How oft are we told this in Scripture, Job viii. 13. xxvii. 5. And our blessed Saviour himself has frequently asserted the same.

There

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There are no Shipwrecks so common as in the Road of Death, and into another World.

[3.] THERE is a departing out of it without any Preparation for it; quitting it in the Neglect of dying Work; leaving that undone, nay, not so much as begun, or enter'd upon. How many adventure upon another State and Life in their Sins, without Grace and all spiritual Furniture. Surely it is greatly dangerous to undertake such a Voyage without making Provision for it!

[4.] THERE is a Leaving it with false, defective, and insufficient Preparations. Thus the foolish Virgins in *Matth. xxv.* and the rich young Man, *Luke xviii.* *Yet lackest thou one Thing.* There are these, with other dangerous Gulphs and Rocks, that should be carefully avoided by us. Let this excite care and caution in us hereabouts.

2. Is it so that we must presently be called out of the World? Let us see that our Spirits and Dispositions be suited and agreeable thereunto, and let us quit it as we ought to do. And here we might briefly consider how we should dye and leave it.

1. We should dye with Submission to the Will of God, with an Acquiescence in his Disposals, as considering that all he does to us will be merciful and fatherly, and that all will be executed in Love and Favour.

2. We should dye not only patiently but joyfully. Reflecting that Death will bring us into the Presence of God our Father, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; and to the Enjoyment of the blessed Societies above. When the Body dies the Soul is not oppress'd in its Ruins, but de-

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liv'd, yea, and has a joyful Liberation thereby.

[3.] WE should die with full Views of Heaven and everlasting Blessedness, casting our Eyes into, and anchoring within the Vail, *Heb. vi. 19.* with that Scripture in our Hearts and Mouths, *John xvii. 24.* *Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am; that they may behold my Glory which thou hast given me.* Doing thus, is looking beyond Death; which is the Way to overcome it.

AND to promote our dying after this Manner, we shall offer some Arguments for quieting and reconciling us to leaving this World.

1.] THIS Earth is the Footstool and meanest Part of the Creation. The luminous Orbs that encompass it, the starry Heavens, are much superiour in Dignity and Excellency, in Glory and Brightness, to it; and without these it would be a Place of total Darkness: A Habitation and Residence in those lower Heavens would far excell an abode on Earth. Indeed it is a Place very agreeable to our gross Bodies, but very unsuitable to immortal Souls.

2.] WE may argue from the State and Properties of it. It is an uncertain, transitory, empty, and vanishing World; a World of Labour, Toil and Temptations; a polluted and polluting World, *James i. 27.* And one of Sin and Darkness; where Satan reigns, and has a confirmed Kingdom: So that one would think it should be no difficult Thing to make us leave such a World as this.

3.] THE Quintessence and very best of it is not very amiable and desirable. Our Siti has wash'd off and stain'd the Glory of it; so that it's become like a Vessel that has lost its beautiful

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beautiful Form: Its Dainties and Excellencies have nothing in them that can be called Goodness absolutely. The Devil laid the Glory of it before our Saviour, and gloss'd and painted it with his sophistical Arts. *Math. iv. 8. Shewed him all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them,* and then the Total did not amount to much. *Solomon stains all the Glory of it in giving it the Character of Vanity of Vanities, Eccl. i. 2.* If we seek to extract the very best that can be drawn from it, it will not be any Thing that is great; and why should we think it hard to depart from such Things?

4.] If we consider what it has been to the best, and what we ourselves have found it to be: It is an unkind, injurious World, faithless, treacherous, and deceitful; *a pricking Briar, Ezek. xxviii. 24.* And have we not found it a flattering World? Has it not wounded and endanger'd our Happiness and brought us to the Brink of Ruin? tho' we get safe through and from it, yet it will be, with the great Hazard and Danger of our precious Souls. And can we expect it will be better for the future? No surely. And is this no Argument to be willing to leave it?

5.] TRUE Believers make a happy Exchange in leaving the World: They go to one much better; exchange it for one of Light, Happiness and Perfection. As a Person comes out of a Dungeon or Prison, and enters a Palace and Place of Liberty; even such as this is the Change the Godly make, when they depart hence to Heaven; and therefore those that have Hopes thereof, should not be unwilling to leave it. Indeed it is not to be counted strange, that the Ungodly should be backward to quit it;

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because they have Ground to fear they shall make an Exchange much for the worse, and their Stay here will be some Adjournment of their Misery.

THUS we see in part what the World and State is we leave, and what Arguments there are to a voluntary Leaving of it. And to back these and the former Considerations we may subjoyn, as a Close to this Use, That Death is now in the Hands of our Lord Redeemer, and that it can do nothing but by Commission from him; he has unstung, alleviated, and taken away the Bitterness of it, to that Degree that he thought meet to do, that all his Followers may pass tolerably and safely through it: And had it been proper and necessary to have made it easier, he could and would have done it. And he has put it into their Power to allay and sweeten it by eminent Holiness, great Diligence, sound Preparations, and getting Assurance of eternal Glory.

3. BEHOLD what a Privilege the Hopes of a future Happiness is, when we shall leave this World, and see all Things failing us, and proceed in your Preparations for such a Time. When all Things about us are perishing, to be able then to look up to those that are everlasting, will be sweet and comfortable. This is according to the Advice of our Lord, *Luke xvi. 9. Make to yourselves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness; that when ye fail, or when these Things fail you, they may receive you, i. e. that you may be received into everlasting Habitations; that we may then have a God to go to, and be put into Possession of Mansions of Glory.* How reasonable will this be! It has oft been the Lot of the Godly to have been stripp'd of temporal Things;

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Things; but then they have had one to receive 'em that has been instead of all, a gracious God, their heavenly Father, to take 'em in. Upon this Account it is that our Lord comforts his Disciples, *Luke vi. 22, 23.* *Blessed are you when Men shall hate you, — and cast out your Name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoyce in that Day; for behold your Reward is great in Heaven.* But then, on the other Hand, How sad will it be to leave and be turn'd out of the World, and be cast off by God also?

AND therefore let us look well to our Preparations, and make sure of a Happiness above, and clear up our Relation and Title to an heavenly Father. That we may be able to say upon good Grounds and Hopes, that God is our Father, and that we may call him so, and be sure the Relation betwixt him and us be well bottom'd and stand firm; and then we need not question his Reception of us, for he will not refuse, or cast by, any of his Children. Now in this glorious Relation there are two Things considerable, the Duty and Privilege of it; and in the right Use of these, we may evidence ourselves to be his. 1. The Duty that attends the Relation; that we have the Spirit of his Child upon us; That we fear, love, please and obey him. In these Things the Son of God, our Redeemer, was eminent, and thereby prov'd his Filiation. And the Performance of the like Duties will do the same as to his adopted ones, and therefore we should study to excel and be eminent in them. 2. The Privilege of it: That we walk worthy of and suitable to this great Dignity, the Honour that we have sh'd upon us hereby; that our Spirits, Ends, Actions and Conversations be holy, high and

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excellent; by Ways becoming and answerable to this inestimable and unfathomable Privilege, the Manifestation and Notification of which will be a Spring of Joy and Consolation unspeakable unto us.

4. THINK what Heaven and the Fruition of this Father will be in Heaven. He is not only a Heavenly Father, but there will be the Enjoyment of him there. A heavenly Father's Presence is comfortable on Earth but how much more will it be so in Heaven! So that there is both a Heaven, and a Father in Heaven: What a Heaven will that be? There he will reveal and open himself to them in another Manner than he did here below: Here he exhibits himself to them in some comfortable Beams and Rays of Grace and Love, but these will be exchang'd for meridian Beams of Glory in Heaven. Oh the ravishing and joyful Entertainments that he has provided for all his there! What Joys, Honours, Glories, and Felicities are there laid up for them! The Saints will find enough there, yea that that will be infinitely beyond Desire and Expectation. There he will open the Treasures of Glory, the great and blessed Things that have been prepared by him and reserved for them from the Foundation of the World. Earthly Parents have only earthly Inheritances to bestow upon their Children. But God being a heavenly Father has a heavenly Inheritance to confer upon those that are his; one that is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away, *1 Pet. i. 4.* A Kingdom that cannot be moved, *Heb. xii. 27.* Infinite Numbers of his Children are long since actually in Possession hereof; and all that are and shall become his Children, shall in like Manner be instated in due Time in the Enjoyment thereof.

thereof. So shall all the Heirs of God and joint Heirs with Christ be honoured and advanced, *Rom. viii. 17.*

THESE, and such like, are comfortable and joyful Subjects for our Meditations; very proper and profitable for all Believers to be taken up with, and exercised in, whilst they are here below. Our Thoughts Hearts and Affections should dwell in Heaven, before we enter upon the full Possession of it.

THE fifth and last Use shall be by Way of Counsel and Direction to us, about leaving the World. We have said much this Way already in the foregoing Part of this Discourse; but there is room for more in a Matter of such great Importance.

1. BE not indifferent, but concerned about the State you leave the World in. Tho' when we dye, we shall be no more in it; yet we should bear the Condition of it upon our Hearts. Moses dies much affected with what the *Israelites* would do after his Departure, *Deut. iv. 16. xxv. 31, 29.* So *Joshua*. And our Lord had the Case of his Apostles upon his Heart after his his Decease. How many Things are there to touch and exercise a tender Spirit? The Kingdom of Satan that's so large and strong, and all the Branches of it; that of Christ's that's so weak and low, the Glory and Honour of God, his Church, and Religion, should lie near unto us. Ministers should leave it with a Concern about their Flocks, and the Souls committed to their Charge. Parents should be touch'd with Regard to Posterity, and that Godliness may survive them, and be continued in their Families: And so it should be in other Instances. The Church Triumphant is formed of the Church Militant on Earth; and this is constity-
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ted of the Materials of Mankind that are prepared, purified, sanctified, and made fit to be Parts of the Spiritual Temple, the Church of God. The more God's Work is carried on and prospered on Earth, so much more will the Church above be augmented and encreased: So greatly is the Glory and Honour of God wrapped up and contained in the State of this World: And therefore, surely, it should be the Matter of our Concern.

2. To come closer. Recollect and sum up your Endeavours, Labours, and Cares about your Salvation; and review your remaining Imperfections, Unfitnesses and Defects; and seek out to have the last Lines of the Holy Spirit drawn upon you. After all that you have done in this great Affair, you'll find many things amiss and wanting in you to make you fit for Heaven; as, Remnants of Sin and Corruption, a Work of Mortification too little advanced, many Spots and Deformities intermixed with Holiness, great Weaknesses and Defects in Grace, Repentance, Faith, Love, &c. Now to whom must we apply to have these Maladies and Wants cured, supplied, and made up, and all that's good encreased and perfected in us, but to the Holy Spirit, through Christ? To whom it belongs to finish his new Creation in us, and make us perfect and entire, *James i. 4.* For so we are assured, and may hope, that where he has begun a good Work he will finish it, *Phil. i. 6.* Now this we should earnestly press after, long and thirst, to be made like to God, and the World we are so near unto.

3. RENEW your Acceptance, and take sure hold of Christ; and all the Means and Helps of Salvation: Get a Faith of Adherence, Affiance, and

and Trust in Christ: Cleave fast to him in all his saving Offices and Excellencies; as the Jews, in Cases of Danger, fled to the Altar and Cities of Refuge: Keep close to, and affectionately embrace the Promises of the Gospel Covenant, the Promises of Life and Salvation; dye with them fast enclasped in the Arms of a living and a lively Faith. God acts towards his People, dispenses forth Life and Death unto all Men, according hereunto. Those that have got a Pardon of temporal Life, will keep it by them, will not part with it upon any Terms whatever; And should not we do so much more by Pardons, Promises, and Charters of Life eternal? None ever perished in the Arms of Christ, nor were cast out of them, that have fled unto them, *John vi. 37.*

4. GET into such Postures, States and Exercises, as are most proper to be found, and meet your Lord in, like the wise Virgins: We should trim our Lamps, *Matth. xxv. 7.* and have our Loyns girt, *Luke xii. 35.* Oh! how ready should we be to receive our Lord! We should wait and look for him, be diligent, that we *may be found of him in Peace, without Spot and blameless,* *2 Pet. iii. 14.* At this Season we should not be found sleeping, *Mark xiii. 36.* but watching, *watching and praying always,* *Luke xxi. 36.* Let him find you with the Robes of Sanctity and the Righteousness of Christ upon you, waiting for him with a Train of Graces in exercise; and as we find the Day of our Departure approaching and drawing nearer, so much the more should we improve in Readiness and Meetness for our Lord's Coming. How happy will those Servants be that shall be found in such a State, and such Exercises!

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5. **B**ALANCE the Fears and Dread of Death, with the Goodness, Care and Tenderness of God, express'd to his People in that Hour. What Child would not adventure itself in his Father's Arms, to carry him over some shallow and narrow Brook? And shall not we trust ourselves much more in a heavenly Father's Hands, in order to the helping us through a dark Entry? The Favour and Care of God infinitely outweighs whatever can be mentioned on the contrary Part. Doubt not but he will do wonderfully for you in that Hour: And therefore say with the Psalmist, xxiii. 4. *Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil.* Oh! the Help and Grace that is vouchsafed and bestowed in this Season!

6. **G**ET all the Views, Openings, and Discoveries of Heaven made to you, that possibly you can. This is a special Time for Faith to be exercised upon Things unseen: Send this Spy then to search out this good Land, and let it remark and note the Glories, Felicities, the Ministriations, and the ravishing Excellencies of it. As Seamen leave and go out of Sight of one Land or Country, they discover another: So should dying Believers do, when this World is disappearing to them, they should get the Knowledge and Acquaintance of Heaven all they can: And this would be of great Use unto them upon several Accounts.

7. **F**ORGET not the Comforts that dying Saints have met with in their last Hours; and fetch in Helps and Arguments from their Examples, to direct and encourage you in the Season of your Departure: A special Use and Improvement may be made hereof. Has God dealt graciously with some? Surely he will do so with

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the rest of his Servants, as their Seasons approach.

8. **R**ESIGN your Bodies and Dust with a believing Assurance of the Resurrection and Restoration of them, and that you will have them return'd to you at last with infinite Advantage. As a drossy Piece of Metal, or Lump, is put into the Fire, and comes out, or is form'd into a curious Vessel: So it will be with the Bodies of the Saints; they will receive them glorious, and fitted for the highest Services and Uses.

To shut up all: *May these Meditations be of Use to all that read them; and may they dye such a Death, and more abundantly so, to their Peace, Joy, and everlasting Happiness.*



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A
DISCOURSE
Concerning the
Way and Passage
OF THE
Saints to Heaven,
FROM

2 PET. I. II.

For so an Entrance shall be ministred to you abundantly, into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



N the preceding Part of this Chapter the Apostle is exhorting the believing Jews (and in them others) to Christian Diligence in Godliness, and the Exercise and Increase of Grace, ver. 5, 6, 7. And besides all this, giving all Diligence, add to your Faith, Virtue; and to Virtue, Knowledge, &c. And to encourage them hereunto,

unto, he acquaints them with the happy Fruits of such a Practice, ver. 8. *For if these things be in you and abound, they make you, &c.* But, as if he had not said enough upon this great and necessary Argument of holy Diligence for the Encrease of Grace, he resumes and presses it again upon them, from the Consideration of the further Benefit that will attend it in clearing up their Salvation, ver. 10. *Wherefore the rather, Brethren, give Diligence to make, &c.* for, saith he, by so doing you'll gain a Title to, and sure Entrance into Heaven: *For so, i. e. by the Practice of the aforesaid Duty of holy Diligence, and an Encrease of Grace, an Entrance shall be administered to you abundantly, &c.*

THE Words present us with two Points.

1. A Promise and Assurance of Salvation and Blessedness to diligent, gracious Persons. The Text respects the State of Christians; their clear and lively Hopes of Heaven.

2. THE Manner of their Passage, Admission, and Reception thither. *An Entrance shall be administered to you abundantly; &c.* They shall have a rich and copious Reception thither. The State of the Candidates of Heaven is various. Some are excluded that seek for Admittance; *They seek to enter, and are not able*, Luke 24. Others go forward with Doubtfulness, Fear and Trembling. But there is a third Sort, that have clear'd up their Right and Title to it, and are making towards it, with great Expectations of the Attainment of it; do not only make an hard Shift to get to Heaven, but get thither with full Sails of Comfort.

THE Words yield us two Points of Doctrine.

1st Doctrine. HEAVEN is the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

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2d Doctrine. THEY who by holy Diligence and an Encrease in Grace are prepared and qualified for that Kingdom, shall have an abundant Entrance or Admission into it.

AMONGST the various Subjects that these Words would lead us to the Consideration of, we shall make choice of these following to prosecute and open for your Benefit.

I. WE shall enquire into the Manner of the Saints Passage to Heaven.

II. CONSIDER the Manner of their Admission and Reception thither; in what Respect they may be said to enter abundantly, or have an abundant Entrance into it.

III. THE Improvement of these Points.

THESE are Subjects that we cannot but be desirous to be inform'd about: Who would not be willing to have such Points clear'd, and set in some tolerable Light before them? The unveiling the Things of the future State, though but in a little Measure, is highly needful and useful. Did we know more of ourselves in all the Changes of our Beings, in the several Conditions we are to pass through, it would conduce to Piety, allay our Fears of Things to come, and better reconcile us to the Leaving this World, and entring upon another.

I. WE are to enquire into the Manner of the Saints Passage to Heaven.

THE Way and Passage of the Godly through this World to the Finishing and Ending their Warfare here, or from their Conversion to the Period of their Days; the Temptations, Trials, Afflictions and Onsets, they meet with in their Way

Way thither. This is not the Subject of our Enquiry: This is known to all. But what that is betwixt their Leaving this present Life and their Arrival at Heaven; in what Manner they are transmitted thither: To traverse and open this Path to you, is the Matter of our present Purpose and Undertaking.

It must be acknowledged, that the Reception of sanctified Souls to Heaven is much clear'd and laid open under the Gospel, especially since Christ's Ascension and Reception thither. We have now the Advantage of discovering more of Matters of this Nature, than they had under the Old Testament Dispensations. Our Blessed Saviour has brought Life and Immortality to light by the Gospel, 2 Tim. i. 10. So that concerning the Point in hand, we may allude to Heb. ix. 8. *The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the Way into the Holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first Tabernacle was yet standing.* But,

1. It is a Way appointed and chosen of God; that's suitable to his Glory, magnifies and exalts his Grace, and is agreeable to his Saints. He has cut out the Way of Salvation in this Life, and the Way to Glory hereafter. It belongs to him that confers and bestows the Reward, to bring his People to it in that Way that's pleasing to him. He that separated the Wilderness and Canaan, by Jordan, has drawn the dark Line of Death betwixt them and Heaven. As our Blessed Lord tasted of Death, even so must it be with his Followers; but the Bitterness of it quickly vanishes, by the Joys that ensue and break forth immediately upon it. God could have cut out another Way thither, but it has pleased him to chalk out such a Path as this

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for them. The Translation of *Enoch* and *Elijah* to Heaven was an Act of divine Prerogative, an Exception from the common Rule of taking Souls thither, and an Instance, probably, how God would have dealt with us, if we had kept our State of Innocency.

2. THE Way and Passage of the Saints to Heaven may be apprehended by the Qualities and excellent Properties of it: There is nothing that we can desire to find in a Way, but it may be met with in this: As,

(1. It is a Way very amiable and luminous. Whilst a pious Soul tabernacles and dwells in Flesh, it lives by Faith upon God, and Christ, and invisible Things; but when it has thrown off that Veil, it is brought into the open Light, comes amongst Spirits, finds itself surrounded, and gains Acquaintance with them. The Joys of Heaven enter a gracious Soul, as soon as it is out of the Body. When it is once got through the *Jordan* of Death, it lands in the celestial *Canaan*; then it enters upon an heavenly State, and presently approaches the Confines and Borders of that blessed World.

THE Way to Heaven in the Entrance of it, in Conversion, is a narrow Gate and Passage, *Matth. vii. 14. Strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way that leadeth to Life*; but towards the End, in the Period of it, it enlarges and grows broader and broader. That of *Solomon* is true of this Way, *Prov. iv. 18. The Path of the Just is as the shining Light, that shines more and more unto the perfect Day*; till the Firmitude or Stability of the Day: *i. e.* The Path of the Righteous is like the Course of the Sun, that still climbs up till it reach its Meridian. The Morning is still more and more in its Encrease and Growth in Bright-

Brightness and Glory. Why such is the Way of the Saints to Heaven. In their Passage thither the Light and Brightness of that World encreases more and more upon them, till they come to be surrounded and filled with it. And this is illustrated by the following Verse, *The Way of the Wicked is as Darkness.* As the Evening Twilight encreases to Midnight, or the thickest Darkness; so they go on from Sin to Sin, till they have plunged themselves in everlasting Darkness.

ALL the Way to Heaven, after the Godly have left the Body, is sweet and luminous, and paved with Love; yea, is like the milky Way in the Heavens, that is full of Light; a starry Way. The Saints in their Way thither pierce through the celestial Orbs, tread upon the azure Pavements, mount and ascend from Sphere to Sphere, till they come to the Heaven of Heavens. Now it is that the Light that is sown for the Righteous, *Psa. xcvi. 11.* rises up into a mighty Crop, breaks forth in a glorious Harvest.

Oh blessed Way! A Way of Life and Glory! Happy they that shall tread it and pass through it to the heavenly *Jerusalem!* Whose Feet shall stand within its Gates, and enter through them into the City!

SUCH as this is the Way our Blessed Redeemer has cut out and open'd for us by his Death. This is the common Way and Road that all the Saints have gone in to Heaven; that Christ, and all his Followers hitherto, have ascended in; and that those that are yet to be glorified must tread and pass, in order to their Arrival at Happiness.

THE Motion of Souls in their Passage to Glory may be conceived under the Term of a

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Flight: So that of the Angels is called, *And I beheld, and heard an Angel flying through the midst of Heaven, Rev. viii. 13. and Chap. xiv. 6.* And sometimes their Motion is resembled to a Swift Flight; *Even the Man Gabriel, whom I had seen at the Beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, Dan. ix. 21.* This lets us see something of the Motion of Spirits, and the Nature of the Saints Motion to Heaven: And we find that, both *Elijah's and our Saviour's Ascent thither was gradual; for the Prophet was seen by Elisha, 2 Kings ii. 12. and Christ by his Apostles, Acts i. 9, 10.*

(2.) THE Passage of the Saints out of this World to Heaven will be safe and certain: They will march out of the World under the Conduct of the Life-Guard of Heaven. The Nature of the divine Promise, the Faithfulness of God, and his Purposes about them, with much more of that Kind, will conduce to their Security. The Kingdom of Heaven is sure to all the Seed, *Deut. iv. 16.* There is Christ's Engagement for the Salvation of them, *John xvii. 12. Those thou hast given me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the Son of Perdition.* And the Apostle Peter tells us, *Eph. i. 5.* that Believers are kept by the mighty Power of God, through Faith, unto Salvation. The Apostle in this Scripture first speaks of Heaven, that that is kept for his People; and then presently tells them, that they are kept for it, by the Power of God. An earthly Inheritance may be sure enough for the Heir; but who can secure the Heir from Death, and other Accidents? But in the present Case God provides for the Comfort of his People both Ways; not only their Inheritance is sure, but they are kept for it

it by his Power: And what greater Safety can there be than this? True, God is able to do it, may a Believer say: But how shall we know that he will do it? Why his Truth is laid to pawn for what he has promised; and therefore they may hold up their Heads with Confidence and Assurance of it. True, there is an Opposition made against the Saints Passage to Heaven, and their Glorification; but it is all unsuccessful, and to no Purpose, for there is a Plenitude of Grace and Power exercised for their Preservation and Security. How express are those Words to this Purpose, *John x. 28. I give unto them eternal Life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any Man pluck them out of my Hand.* But as if he had not said enough, he repeats it with a Confirmation and Addition in the following Verse, *My Father which gave them me, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's Hand.* By the Care and Conduct of the Father, and the Lord Redeemer, they are secured against all Dangers; so that if Legions of fallen Angels should encounter them in their Passage, they could not prevail against them.

How grateful, sweet, and comfortable a Meditation is this, of the Security of the Saints Passage to Glory! The Guardian Angels will not betray, nor be unfaithful in this peculiar Office that is assign'd 'em. How impossible is it to conceive with what hellish Rage and Envy the fallen Angels behold the Flights of sanctified Souls to Heaven? Utterly despairing to make a Prey of them, as once they hoped they should, when they lay open to their Temptations and Sollicitations, in the present Life. In a Word, After this Manner will the Souls of the Godly

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be transported, with the greatest Care and Safety, to Glory.

(3. THEY will have an honourable Passage out of the World to Heaven. The Way of Godliness is honourable all along; but especially it is so in the Conclusion and Period of it. God puts Dignity, confers Honours upon the Saints in this Life; but especially will he do so at last: Then their Investiture, with glorious Privileges, will commence and break forth; and then it begins to appear what they will be, *1 John iii. 2.* Angels are about the Sick-Beds of the Godly, but then they'll begin their Office of Conveying them to Heaven. And this is one of the most eminent and signal Ministrations of theirs about the Heirs of Salvation. They performed many Offices about them in this Life, but they were all inferior to this, and in order to it. The Angels attend and wait upon them at this Time: 1. As Guardians, Protectors, and Defenders of them. The Souls of the Faithful are transported by a Guard of Angels (those immortal Warriours, as one calls them) through the Devil's Kingdom to eternal Rest. 2. As Directors and Guides to lead them to Heaven: As Pilots to transport them to the Haven of everlasting Blessedness. Though a gracious Soul, when divested of the Body, would of itself, by a sacred Instinct, find the Way to Heaven, as Things naturally move towards their Center: Though, I say, we may suppose such choice Sparks as these would fly upwards; yet they have the Help and Direction of the Angels herein, who we are assured are very well acquainted with the heavenly Road, and cannot miss the Way thither. 3. They attend and accompany them for State and Magnificence; to grace

grace their Ascent to Heaven; to bring them thither in a Way and Manner as becomes the Heirs of Salvation. Like as a Prince sends some of the Retinue of his Court to accompany his Son, or some of his Family, to bring them home; even so it is in the present Case. In this World the Life of the Saints *is hid with Christ in God*, Col. iii. 3. but afterwards it breaks forth in its Greatness and Glory. The Godly are in the present State born to great Things, and have a Right to the Honours of God's Children; yet these are not actually conferr'd upon them till after Death. Oh how magnificent and royal an Equipage is the Attendance of the blessed Angels! All the Pomp and Glory of the World is nothing to it; yet such Honour shall all his (even the meanest of them) have at their Departure.

To the same Purpose speaks an Author: 'God will not only have his People brought home to him safely, but honourably. They shall come to their Father's House in a be-coming Equipage, as the Children of a King. This puts Honour upon our Ascension-Day, that it's adorn'd by the Attendance of such illustrious Creatures upon us. 'Tis no small Honour which God designs us herein, that Creatures of greater Dignity than ourselves shall be sent from Heaven to wait and attend upon us thither.'

WHAT Numbers of Angels attend the Godly on this Occasion, may be guess'd at by the Multitude of them that there is in Heaven, and by the great Numbers that waited on our Lord Redeemer, and celebrated his Incarnation, Luke ii. 13. *And suddenly there was with the Angel a Multitude of the heavenly Host.* However this be,

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be, we may be sure there are so many minister on this Occasion, as to make up a Choir or Chorus, which are more than a few. But Matters of Nicety and Speculation are better waved than look'd too far into.

(4. THEY will have a joyful and triumphant Passage and Transport to Heaven. The Day of Death is the last and finishing Scene of a Christian's Sorrows, and a Commencement of an eternal Day of Light and Gladness, of their absolute Liberation and Freedom; a Season of universal Joy. 1. It will be so on the Part of the Saints themselves. We have observ'd before that the Joys of Heaven enter a gracious Soul as soon as it is out of the Body; or that it then enters into those Joys, is then brought into the Presence of God himself, and a State of full Communion with him, and consequently will exercise the greatest Joys: So that the Day of Death will be of the Nature of a Coronation or Inauguration-Day, a Day of the Saints Investiture with celestial Dignities, and therefore a Day of Gladness. How did the Jews first Entrance upon the promised Land inspire them with a marvellous Exultation? But how much more will it be so with the Saints, when they are entring and enter'd upon the celestial Canaan? Oh how pleasant, how sweet and joyful will every Step, Motion, and Flight of sanctify'd Souls be towards that blessed Home and Rest! 2. It will be so on the Part of the Angels that attend them to Heaven. These will rejoice and act a Triumph in carrying another Member of Christ, a Fellow-Saint and Fellow-Worshipper, thither. If they rejoice to much at the Conversion of a Sinner, as our Blessed Saviour tells us twice over, that they do, *Luke xv. 7, 10.* There is

is Joy in the Presence of the Angels of God, over one Sinner that repenteth: Much more may we suppose they rejoice in the final Salvation and Glorification of them, when the Works of Grace are perfected in them, and they are taken into a State of Communion with them; and when they have so compleatly executed the Message they were sent about, and brought the Soul along with them to Glory. This is agreeable Work to those blessed Spirits, and cannot but yield them great Matter of Exhilaration and Rejoycing.

We are apt to triumph in Victories, gathering great Spoils, and gaining valuable Prizes: But how much greater Matter is there for Triumph when precious Souls, that are of such high Value, are secured in the Hands of Angels, and are carrying away to Heaven? We cannot imagine how these blessed Spirits glory in such Prizes; and how expedite and concern'd they are to lodge them safe in the Arms of their Redeemer.

AND now, How do these Matters affect us, and work upon our Hearts? Are we not all ready to say, Oh that my Soul may tread this blessed and happy Path! Have the friendly Assistance and honourable Society of Angels when I shall go hence! Into their Hands (as Agents of my Blessed Lord, and as acting under him) I'll recommend my departing Soul, as knowing they'll be faithful in the Discharge of that Trust that is committed to them.

WHAT we have said upon the foregoing Subject is fully clear'd and confirm'd to us, in two Instances.

1. THAT of our Blessed Saviour's Passage out of the World to Heaven. The Scripture takes

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takes particular Notice of it, and it's an Article of our Faith, and deserves chief Regard from us. It's said, *Act. i. 9.* that *a Cloud received him out of their Sight.* This some call *Vehiculum Regale*, the Royal Chariot; upon, and by which, he was carried up towards Heaven. This Cloud was appointed to carry up the King of Glory to his princely Pavilion; and then a royal Guard of glorious Angels to wait upon his Chariot, *Psalm lxviii. 17, 18.* *The Chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of Angels.* *Thou hast ascended on High, &c.* If the Angels came so chearfully to proclaim his Incarnation when he came into the World, what Triumphs may we suppose they perform'd at his Ascension, when he left it, and return'd to Heaven to possess the glorious Throne and Seat of his eternal Residence! To this we may add the *xlviith Psalm*, particularly the 5th and 6th Verses, *God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a Trumpet.* *Sing Praises to God, sing Praises, &c.* What are these Praises and Sound of Trumpets, but those Voices and Acclamations the Angels utter'd to celebrate his Ascension to Heaven? when he led his Enemies, Death, Sin, and the fallen Angels Captive, spoiling Principalities and Powers; *Eph. iv. 8.* when he *ascended up on High, he led Captivity captive.* Now in some Resemblance hereto do his Followers pass to Heaven, the Members being in this honour'd with being treated in some Conformity to what their Head was; but with this Difference, that his Ascension was attended with greater Numbers of Angels, theirs with less; his with the loudest Joys, Praises and Triumphs, and theirs with those that become his Servants. Thus is our Blessed Redeemer a Pattern to his People, not only in his *asces*

his Death and Resurrection, but in his Ascension ; God is pleased to honour them with one that carries a Similitude to that of his own Son.

2. ANOTHER Instance is that of *Lazarus*, of whom we read, *Luke xvi. 22. And it came to pass that the Beggar died, and was carried by the Angels into Abraham's Bosom*. Hence some have stiled them heavenly Porters. They are, we see, heavenly Messengers, sent to fetch prepared Souls home to their Father's House ; and very apt and proper Ministers and Instruments they are to that purpose. Now none can imagine that this Privilege was peculiar to *Lazarus* ; but that it is the common Case of all the Saints : The very same Offices they did for him, they do for all the rest upon their Departure hence.

We may now look back upon and review the Whole, and see what it is to be a godly Person : Behold the happy and glorious Issue and Result of Godliness ! This should make us cry out, Let me be of this Number ; *Die the Death of the Righteous, and my latter End be like his*, Numb. xxiii. 10.

To conclude the Whole. We might here consider how it befalls the Ungodly at their leaving the World : May we not take it for granted, that as the holy Angels are employ'd about the Godly at their Departure, so the Devil and his Angels are busily exercis'd and employ'd in securing and carrying them to their appointed Place ?

II. CONSIDER the Manner of the Admission and Reception of the Saints to Heaven ; and in what Respect they may be said to have an abundant Entrance into it.

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WE have shewn what an happy Passage they have thither; and now we must enquire into their Reception, the Manner of their Entrance into the Kingdom.

As an Introduction hereunto, we may observe that there is a twofold Entrance and Reception of the Saints into Heaven.

1. Of particular Members at present, as they are glorified singly and personally: Every Saint has his peculiar Season of Reception thither. 2. Of the Saints in common and together at the End of the World, when the Church Triumphant shall go along with, and accompany Christ to Glory, upon the Conclusion of the Judgment at the last Day. It is the former of these that falls under our present Consideration.

GOD has declared his Willingness and Purpose about the Reception of all his faithful Servants to him, and the Glorification of them; and he has resolved that this shall be done in the most observable and honourable Manner, agreeable to what their Passage to it is; that he may be glorified, and his Love and Grace may be eminently display'd and magnified therein.

THE Text informs us, that this great and finishing Act upon the Saints is perform'd in a Way of Ministration; *An Entrance shall be administered to you into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord.* Now this admits and is capable of a two-fold Sense. 1. It may have respect to the holy Diligence and the Graces of the holy Spirit that he exhorts them to in the Context; intimating that these will be a Qualification for, open the Way, and conduce to an Entrance into Heaven. As the wise Virgins, by having their Lamps furnish'd with Oyl, were admitted and received to the Wedding-Supper, through

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the Want of which the foolish Virgins were shut out: So a Train or Chorus of Graces, (as the Word in the Original allows us to speak, of which more presently) or a System of Graces, is necessary to bring Persons to Heaven, to introduce them thither: A Train, I say, of these will minister thereunto. Upon which Occasion we may allude to *Psalm xlvi. 14. She shall be brought to the King in Raiment of Needle-Work.* May we all be array'd and prepared after this Manner, that we may partake of a Reception thither. 2. The Term may respect the Manner of the Saints Reception to Heaven, *viz.* That it will be by the Agency and Ministration of Angels, whose Office it is to be employ'd in this great Affair, to fetch departed Souls to that blessed World: And the original Word *επιχορηγεῖσθαι* gives us Ground for such a Sense, for it signifies to lead a Chorus, or to be led by a Chorus; thereby importing to us, that the Saints are led and brought to Glory by a Chorus or Choir of Angels appointed for that Work, *viz.* to perform this kind Office for them, bring them to Heaven. But of this, and the foregoing Sense, more afterwards. Only by the way, we have seen something already as to the Service of Angels in conveying them thither; and in what follows, we shall find them also engaged about their Admission into it. But to the Point.

1. It notes to us the Greatness and Riches of saving Grace, that will be manifested to the Saints in bringing them to Heaven, in their Reception thither. The Grace of God is exercis'd towards them all along, through the whole Course of their Salvation; but it will appear in its greatest Lustre and Glory at this time; it shews itself more gloriously, shines more bright than

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than in any other Instances. And this seems to be fully import'd in the original Word ~~wa-~~
~~ws,~~ which is render'd *abundantly*, and refers to the Riches of God's Grace shewn to his Saints. How oft do we read of *Riches of Grace*, *the Riches of the Glory of his Grace*, *the exceeding Riches of his Grace*? Eph. i. 7, 18. chap. ii. 7, and in other Places, in all which the same Word is used with this in the Text. Oh then all the Treasures of Grace will be opened, the rich Fountains of it set a running, and, like a River, will overflow the very Banks! How richly and abundantly will it shew itself in taking them into the Kingdom? And what Ravishment will it raise in the Saints to observe the Operations and Displays of it, and make the very first of their Songs when they come to Heaven to be *Grace, Grace?*

2. THAT advanced Degrees and Measures of Grace in Believers contribute to this Privilege, have a special Conducement to give Persons such an Entrance into Heaven; because of the Joys and Comforts that result from it, and the lively Sense and Assurance of a Title to it, that it begets in those that partake thereof. The Context countenances this Sense. Excelling in Grace does much to the clearing a Right to Heaven; for when it is in its Radiancy and Lustre, it's is self-manifesting, and discovers itself to the Soul. One that has true Grace, his Title to Heaven is safe and certain; but not so comfortable as one that has higher Degrees of it. ' If you abound in Grace (faith one) you shall have an abundant Entrance into God's heavenly Kingdom; your Way to it opened and enlarged.' This will give great Boldness to the Saints, carry them above Fears and Doubts, and

and, with a more direct Sail, into the Harbour of eternal Rest; and those that advance to like Degrees of Grace, may reckon upon partaking of the same Privilege as others do.

3. A Participation of this great Privilege consists in sending into the Souls of Believers, and communicating to them some Beams and Rays of heavenly Joys, Comforts and Sweetness, in this Life; giving them a Taste of celestial Dainties, by Way of Anticipation, before they come there in Person. Many excellent and holy Ones have been favour'd herewith, 2 Cor. vii.

4. *I am exceeding joyful in all our Tribulation.* 1 Pet. i. 8. *Ye rejoice with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory.* Now this hath most happy Effects upon Persons, scatters and dissipates their Fears and Doubts, gives them an Enlargement of Heart, sets them in the View and Sight of that blessed Country, shews them the holy City, places them upon the Borders of it, and is a certain Forerunner of a full Entrance into it in Time. When a Heart has something of Heaven let down into it, and is fill'd with it, it is a sure Token of that Person's coming thither in a While.

4. THE Saints may be said to have an abundant Entrance, &c. in that all Hindrances and Obstructions to their Possession of Heaven will be taken out of the Way, or in that there will be no Hindrances thereunto: All Obstacles will be removed; there will be no Accusers, or Anti-Pleaders, to assign any Reasons why they should not be admitted and received into Heaven: No evil Angels can block up the Way to this Paradise, or shut the Entrance into it. The Apostle *Paul* has clear'd this Matter in the bold Challenge he makes in the Name of all

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the Saints, *Rom.* viii. 33, 34, 35. *Who shall lay any thing to the Charge of God's Elect?* &c. *Who is he that condemns?* &c. *Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ?* &c. And it is worthy of Notice, how he turns his Interrogations into a triumphant Conclusion, *Ver. 38, 39.* *For I am persuaded, that neither Death, nor Life, &c.* So that the Way to Heaven will be clear from all Impediments; all Fears, Clouds, &c. will be fled, and carried away for ever. In a Word, All Mountains of Difficulties will be removed and levelled, and all will be planed and made easy to their Admission into Heaven.

5. IN that the Saints will enter Heaven with the most ardent and fullest Desires and Affections. Never did Vessel make more speedy Sail into the Harbour; never any catch more earnestly at a Prize, than they will reach forth to the glorious Reward. In the present Life they are oft dull in their Motions Heavenwards: But how vigorous will they be at last? There is nothing stronger than the Inclinations of the Saints at this Time towards Heaven. The Apostle *Paul* expresses much of this excellent Spirit in *Phil.* iii. 11, 12, 13, 14. With the swiftest Motions will they enter this blessed Country: They'll fly like Seraphims towards this common Center of eternal Rest. The same Apostle expresses the Duty of Believers about the celestial Reward in a Term of great Importance, *1 Tim.* vi. 12. *Lay hold of eternal Life:* But with how much greater Vehemence and Affection may we conclude that Saints at last will do so in a proper Sense.

6. WITH respect to the plenary Right that the Saints have to Heaven, they may be said to have an Entrance abundantly. They have a manifold

manifold Title to it; a Right by the great Charter of the Gospel, seal'd to them in the Death of Christ, with the Earnests and Beginnings of Heaven upon them, *viz.* the holy Spirit, and Grace and holy Qualifications perfected in them; and, as a Confirmation of all, are entring upon the Possession of it. Now these, with other Things, will give them a free Admission; open the Way to Heaven for them in the fullest and amplest Manner imaginable.

THE Case of the Saints as to this Matter will be indisputable: There will be no Allegations brought against them. They were formerly enroll'd and register'd amongst the Heirs of Heaven, and are going to be number'd and rank'd amongst the Possessors of it: But of this under the fourth Head.

7. As to the Manner of bestowing Heaven upon them; the full and free Admission they will have into it: They'll be put into the Possession of the Inheritance and Kingdom in the most ample and generous Manner. The Gates of it are set wide open for the Saints to enter in, by and with the full Consent of the blessed Trinity. What's said of Araunah, 2 Kings xxiv. 23. *All these Things did Araunah, as a King, give unto the King,* may be applied to the Case before us, God's bestowing Heaven upon his Saints: He gives it them as a King; yea, like the King of Kings. Christ tells us, Luke xii. 32. that it is his Father's good Pleasure to give his Disciples the Kingdom. All is free relating to Heaven. It was freely purchased by Christ. The Election of the Saints is a free Act: Their Vocation, Conversion, Sanctification and Justification, is so; and the bestowing it is so likewise. Never was Gift more freely given than God does Heaven.

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Men oft give grudgingly, but he does it bountifully; they do it with Limitations, but he gives absolutely, and without Reserves: He gives his lesser Gifts liberally, *James i. 5.* and his great Ones, Heaven itself, in the same Manner. All Ways are enlarged, and all is laid open for a Prince's Entrance to his Throne; and in like Manner is it so here. Thus, and much more richly and abundantly, are the Saints admitted and received to Heaven.

NON E are excluded out of Heaven, nor are its Gates shut upon any but the unprepared; and stand open continually for the Admission of the Godly, as it is prophesied of the Gospel-Church, *Isa. lx. 11.* that her *Gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut Day nor Night.*

AND here it aptly falls into Consideration, The Manner of their Reception and Admission. This is a Point that requires our special Consideration.

(1. It will be honourable and glorious: They will enter in a magnificent and glorious Manner. As their Passage to Heaven will be Princely and Great, even like thereunto will their Entrance be; not in Meanness, but Majesty, after the Manner of Conquerors and Triumphers. They will enter ~~now~~, gloriously, pompously, and agreeably to the Excellency and Dignity of the Kingdom they enter upon, and as becomes the Heirs of it. We read much of the splendid Entries that Princes have made upon great and special Occasions. Solomon's Ascent unto the Temple was very glorious; but these were nothing to what theirs will be. Such Things as these, and greater, shall be pour'd upon the Saints in the Day of their Glorification. The Carrying the Souls of Believers to Heaven is a great

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great Trust, and is managed after the Manner of a solemn Embassy.

At Death the Saints put off their filthy Garments, and so will enter clad and array'd with Robes and Attire becoming Heaven: Mortality will be swallow'd up of Immortality; Death, of Life eternal; and Meanness, of Majesty and Glory.

(2. THEY will be brought home, and received with all the Testimonies and Marks of Joy, Gladness and Endearment. They may be said to enter abundantly, with respect to the Welcome and Reception they shall meet with at their Entrance thither. There is something express'd to the Saints at their Arrival in Heaven that we may conceive of, under the Notion of Congratulations and Welcomings of them thither. As one that has been in Foreign Countries a great While, is joyfully received at his Return: Even something like hereunto it is in the present Case. None arrive at Heaven, but it's thro' many Dangers, great Hazards, Hardships and Temptations, *Rev. vii. 14.* *These are they that come out of great Tribulation.* Now this Consideration makes their Arrival at Heaven more sweet to themselves, and more endearing and affecting to others that are got thither before them. Now this Welcome and Entertainment is either, 1. From the Blessed Trinity; or, 2. From Angels and Saints. 1. From the Blessed Trinity. They give forth some Significations of their Acceptation of them, Well-pleasedness in and with them, and with their Arrival thiere: And this is done and made known by some glorious Beams and Rays emitted from the Divine Majesty upon them. The Form of entertaining the Prodigal seems

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to be a faint Emblem or Shadow hereof, Luke xv. 22, 23. *The Father said to his Servants, Bring forth the best Robe and put it on him, and bring hither the fatted Calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry.* These Words carry in them much of the Expressions of a heavenly Father's Heart towards returning Converts; but there is much more of this Kind manifested to the Saints at their coming to Heaven. We may conceive of it as express'd in such Words as these: 'This ransom'd Soul is brought thro' all the Hazards, Dangers, and Tribulations of the World, and therefore we receive it into our everlasting Embraces and Endearments.' Has God the Father such Bowels for his whilst they are below? Much more surely will they be moved, and yern towards them above. And how will the Lord Redeemer be affected at the Sight and Fruit of his Purchase and Undertakings? We may humbly conceive of it in such a Form as this: 'Thou art one of those I have shed my Blood for, the Soul that I took care of in the World, espoused and married to my self; thou hast been the Object of my Love and Care a long While, but now I have fetch'd thee home thou art much more so. See and behold the Happiness of this Place. This I have procured for thee. Here thou shalt have an eternal Residence: And as I gave my self for thee on the Cross; so I will now be the Object of thy Enjoyment, and thou shalt be mine, for ever.' 2. They will have a joyful Welcome from Angels and Saints. They think of the Godly that are on Earth with Pleasure; and certainly then, to see them brought to Heaven will be much more Matter of their Delight. It is as the Delight of the Angels to minister to them

Saints to Heaven. 71

them on Earth, and forward them in their Way to Heaven; but it will be sweeter abundantly to have them Partners and Fellow-Worshippers with them Above. The Arrival of a Soul at Heaven makes an Addition to the glorified Number, and in some Degree adds to the Perfection of the Whole. The Collection, or gathering the Saints together, is what is gradually doing, during a Church Militant here on Earth, and will be so till the Consummation of all Things. To this Purpose one speaks: 'All the Angels and Saints above have, as it were, an overflowing Joy, when the People of God are brought safe to that everlasting Kingdom.' And again, With what triumphant Joy do the Saints welcome one another after they are past through these dangerous Seas, the Troubles and Temptations of this wicked World, and are arrived safe to the Bosom of God! With respect to the preceding Meditations, the following Hymns seem very agreeable

*Then let my Soul march boldly on,
Press forward to the heav'nly Gate:
There Peace and Joy eternal reign,
And glitt'ring Robes for Conqu'rors wait,*

And elsewhere:

*See the kind Angels at the Gates,
Inviting us to come:
There Jesus, the Forerunner, waits,
To welcome Travellers home.*

8. THEY will be put into the full and compleat Possession of Heaven, without any Limitations, Restrictions and Reservations. There

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will be no Exemptions or Exceptions, as to Privileges, Term, Duration, &c. but it will be for ever, and extend and reach to all celestial Enjoyments; they will have a large and ample Portion of eternal Glory in Heaven. We have the Form of their Possession given by Christ himself, Mat. xxv. 34. *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, &c. q. d.* Come possess that which was prepared for you before you had a Being in the World. Christ himself will give them Possession, with a *Well done good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord,* ver. 23. Take Possession of the whole Inheritance, of the celestial Crown and Glory, as fully as if there was none but thy self to enjoy it. Inherit the Kingdom; they are Heirs of it, and *Joynt-Heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 17.* When a Soul is received to Heauen, we may suppose Christ to say to it; *Lo, all these Glories, Honour and Felicities, are yours; they are yours by Virtue of my Father's Grant and Donation, and my Purchase: All Things are yours, and ye are mine, and I am God's, 1 Cor. iii. 23.* What a wonderful Security is here! How undisturbed and sure are the Enjoyments of the Saints in Glory!

IN short, in these and other Respects that we cannot reach unto, it is that the Saints shall have an abundant Entrance into Heaven; and that that crowns and is the Emphasis of the Whole, is, that it's the Kingdom of Christ, the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that they enter into and upon: A Kingdom that's purchased by him: A Kingdom that's *reserved and kept for them, 1 Pet. i. 4.* and that will be bestow'd upon them with all the Marks and Tokens

Tokens of Favour, Regard and Honour, that possibly can be.

AND thus having spoken of the Reception of the Saints to Heaven, we might proceed in considering the Manner of our Lord's Reception thither. This is prophetically represented to us in the Old Testament, by bringing the Ark into the Place prepared for it by *David*, in *Psalm xxiv. 7.—10.* *Lift up your Heads, O ye Gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting Doors, that the King of Glory may enter in.* And it's repeated again to make it more emphatical. And this is made a Figure of Christ's Entrance into Heaven. The Entrance of a triumphant and victorious Captain is here described. The Angels are the chief Agents in this glorious Scene and Action, and are brought in as ministering, and gracing his Entrance thither, with their Applauses and Acclamations, as they assisted and ministered at his Ascension, of which we spoke before. But we have express Mention of it in the New Testament. In *Mark xvi. 19.* it is said, *He was received up into Heaven: And i Tim. iii. 16.* that he was received up into *Glory.* The Word is not *ἀνέβη*, but *ἀνελόθη.* Now this notes to us, i. The Act of God the Father hereabouts; his Acceptation of, and welcoming him to Heaven. He enter'd with a plenary Right and Authority; yet there was his heavenly Father's Pleasure and Affection seen, and manifested and shewn herein. As it was his Desire he should come into the World, and leave his Throne and Glory, that he possess'd from Everlasting; so it was that he should return to, and reassume it, upon the Performance of the Work of Redemption. So that the Affections of his heavenly Father were herein exerted towards him in the highest Degree; and,

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and, as a Testimony hereof, he invested him with all possible Honours and Dignities; *Set him at his own right Hand in the heavenly Places*, Eph. i. 20. and entertain'd him with all agreeable and imaginable Endearments proper for a heavenly Father to express towards the only Son of his Delights and Satisfaction. 2. His Reception to Glory may be consider'd, with respect to Angels and Saints; the Welcome they gave him; the Acclamations, Homages and Adorations, they paid unto him at his Return to Heaven. Oh the Joy, the Gladness and Triumphs, that were utter'd on this great Occasion! They that celebrated his Passage and Ascent thither with such Thanksgivings and Praises, would surely be no less active in joyful Acknowledgments and Exultations at his Entrance into those glorious Regions: They would surely acknowledge him as their blessed Redeemer, as the Conqueror of Death and Satan, and as King of the celestial Dominions; and ascribe to him all *Glory, Blessing, Honour, Dominion, Wisdom, Strength, and Power*, Rev. v. 12, 13. Thus, and much more abundantly, was he receiv'd and entertain'd by blessed Spirits; as in some Proportion thereunto it is, and will be, with his Followers, as we have already shewn above.

WE might conclude the Whole with considering, The Manner of the Ungodly their entring upon, and the Reception and Treatment they will meet with in Hell. This will be the direct Reverse to the preceding Account. Instead of joyful Praises, there will be Roarings, Horrors, Lamentations, Insultings over them, and every thing else, that will encrease their Misery, and cast them into Sorrows that are everlasting and unexpressible.

AND

AND now that we may sum up all that we have said, and reduce these two Generals into one. We have with great Defectiveness laid before you the grand Point of your Salvation in the two important Branches and finishing Parts of it, viz. the Passage and Translation, and Admission and Reception into that Blessedness, which is the great and concluding Act, the Commencement and Compleating of your everlasting Felicity. The Improvement of which now falls under our Consideration.

III. THE Improvement.

1. WE may learn how doleful it is to be debar'd the glorious Privileges before mention'd, and to have no Part nor Lot in them, no Right to them; to hear of them, and not be a Partaker of them; to be denied an Entrance and Admittance into Heaven. This is like the Punishment the unbelieving Lord was threatned with, 2 Kings vii. 2. *Thou shalt see it with thine Eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.* How grievous was it to the foolish Virgins to have the Door shut upon them, Mat. xxv. 11, 12. This is what our Lord represents to us in the Parable of the Houſholder, Luke xiii. 25. *When once the Master of the House hath risen up, and hath ſhut to the Door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the Door, &c.* And this he applies in ver. 28. *There ſhall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth, when ye ſhall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets, in the Kingdom of God, and you yourselves cast out.* What a Loss will the Deprivation of all these Honours amount unto, together with the Glory that follows upon them!

2. THIS acquaints us with, and lets us see the happy Fruits of Christ's Death and Sacrifice,

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fice, and how we are indebted to him for it: He is the Ground and Source of all our Privileges: He has open'd the Gates of Heaven, and it is his Kingdom that is below'd upon his People. In *Luke* xxii. 29. he tells his Apostles and Followers, that he appoints unto them a Kingdom, or he does by Will (as the Word signifies, or may be render'd) dispose a Kingdom to them. It's through him that the Angels are reconciled to us, and honour us with their Ministrations. We should stamp the Name of our Lord Redeemer upon all our Privileges, engrave it as a Signet upon all we have. Oh the Homage, Honour, Glory and Praise, that is owing to him! Fer of him, and through him, and by him, and consequently to him, are all Things. So that as the Sun is the Center and Fountain of all the Rays and Beams of Light that we enjoy, so is Christ of all our spiritual and eternal Blessings; of those that we have in the Way, and that we shall enjoy for ever in eternal Glory.

3. How then should we enquire what it is that would straiten and make our Way to Heaven difficult and dubious, and avoid it; and practise and exercise ourselves in those Things that would facilitate and make it easy! It concerns us to enquire what these are; what will befriend and help us onward towards Heaven; and what will obstruct, shut us out of that Kingdom, and make it inaccessible to us. Not a few have bolted the Door of Happiness against themselves, when otherways they might have obtain'd Admittance. The rich young Man in the Gospel excluded himself by an undue and excessive Love of the World, *Luke* xviii. 22, 23. When a Contempt of perishing Things, and a greater Estimation

Estimation and Preference of heavenly Ones would have brought him thither. There is an Army of Sins and Lusts, which, when they are predominant, any of them, will shut the Door of Heaven upon us; even as there is a System of Graces and Duties, which, if rightly acted and perform'd, will have a Tendency to the Fruition of it. What Caution and holy Fear then should be exercis'd and us'd in this great Affair!

4. THIS may be improved for the Abatement and Allaying the Fears of Death to godly Persons. We see how safe the Case of sanctified departed Souls is. God has undertaken the Bringing them to Heaven. Their whole Concern is lodged in the best, safest, and most faithful Hands. Jesus Christ is the Conqueror of Death, and all the Enemies of our Salvation: He bids his Disciples be of *good Cheer*, in that he has *overcome the World*, John xvi. 33. and therein the Prince of the World.

Is it not great Satisfaction and Comfort that we shall fall into such safe, careful, and faithful Hands as those of trusty Angels; that never miscarried in any Executions or Embassies of this Kind? nor, indeed, in any others.

THEY may object, That they are Strangers to, and unacquainted with the Way to Heaven; they never went it, nor have spoken to any that have gone it. But is there not enough to silence such Reasonings? For we have all the Satisfaction about it that the Case will admit of. It's a Point of Faith, and not of Sense, and we are assur'd that none have miscarried in, but all have got safe through it; and there's nothing wanting on God's Part to secure and bring them to Blessedness. This, with other Considerations should

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should make us easy under the divine Conduct hereabouts.

5. We may see what great Encouragements there are to holy Diligence, an Encrease of Grace and of our spiritual Stock, and the happy Advantages thereof. This great Privilege of the Text is the happy Fruit of it. The Rule of the Wise Man holds true in Spirituals, *Prov. x.*
4. *He becomes poor that deals with a slack Hand; but the Hand of the Diligent maketh rich.* Such a Method as this would raise the spiritual Building, bring in Peace and Comfort, clear a Title to Heaven, and make Way for a joyful and abundant Entrance thither. Let us readily then take the Advice of the Apostle in the 5th, 6th, and 7th Verses, *Add to our Faith, Virtue; to Virtue, Knowledge; to Knowledge, Temperance, &c.* These are Considerations that should be very powerful to quicken us to holy Diligence, and are proper Matter for an Age of sloathful Christians to exercise themselves upon for their Cure and Excitation.

E X H O R T A T I O N.

1. LET negligent, careless Sinners behold their Sin and Damage in the Matter before us; see what a Kingdom the Kingdom of the Lord Redeemer is that is set before them, and offer'd and tender'd to them; and how great a Crime and Folly it is to neglect and slight it, to lose it and exclude ourselves out of it, when it's propos'd upon such Conditions, and holy Diligence will open us the Way unto it. What a Loss will this be? What will the Loss of such a Kingdom, of such Excellency and Glory, amount unto? A Kingdom that's so amiable in itself, and the Way that leads to it so very honourable. What can the Forfeiture of such a Kingdom be but

but astonishing Madness! Let us then become Wise in time, and turn our Neglect into a diligent and vigorous Prosecution of it; exert our Zeal, our Cares, Thoughts and Endeavours, about it; suffer nor admit of nothing to intercept or deprive us of it; and be exercis'd in every thing that will lead and contribute to the Attainment and Fruition of it.

2. Let this Kingdom, the Prosecution, Securement, and obtaining a Part in it, and the Possession of it, be in your Eyes and upon your Hearts, be the chief Aim and Desire of your Souls; getting a Right and Title to it now, in order to the Possession and Fruition of it hereafter. This is a Subject worthy and deserving of our Thoughts, Cares and Prosecutions: Be cautious you do not fall short of it. Let not others Neglects of it make you cold and indifferent towards it. Slack not, but encrease your Motions and Endeavours for the Attainment of it. What glorious Objects of Faith are these great Matters! All Things deserve to be overlook'd for them; and all the Glories and Honours of the World are damp'd and lose their Lustre, if set against and in Comparison with this Kingdom. Let others look which Way they will, never so much off it, yet be sure that your Eyes and Hearts be directed towards and fix'd upon it. This Kingdom is the great Object of the Views, Aims, Desires, Hopes and Expectations of all the Godly: This Way they are looking, and here they have their Eyes terminated and fix'd. We should, and may say: 'Let me look upon, and see nothing else but God, and Christ, and his Kingdom; and do nothing else in Comparison to the securing the Possession of them; and that I may be at last brought to the Enjoyment of

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of them by the happy Conduct of those heavenly Messengers, the blessed Angels.' Oh! why should such Matters as these be Cyphers to us? Or any Objects whatever obstruct or intercept our Sight of them?

UNDER this we might consider what's requir'd to instate us in, and intitle us to Heaven, and that we may have such a Passage and Reception thither as this of the Text, *an abundant Entrance into it*; or what are the Ways and Means leading to this Privilege. And in order hereunto, we may observe these Things following:

(1. THAT a Right to Heaven consists in having something wrought in us, *John iii. 3. Except a Man be born again, &c.* and in something to be done by us, or that's requir'd of us.

(2. A Right and Title to Heaven is always accompanied with a Meetness and Likeness to it, *Col. i. 12. Giving Thanks to the Father, who has made us meet, &c.*

(3. THERE is a Right to Heaven, and the Manifestation and Confirmation of that Right, *Eph. i. 13. In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed, &c.*

(4. THE Sense, Evidence, and Notification of a Right to the Kingdom, is the Ground of a Believer's Comfort and Assurance, *Rom. viii. 16. The Spirit itself beareth witness, &c.*

(5. THERE is the Obtainment of a Right to Heaven, and the Continuance of that Right. There are the first Acts of saving Grace, and secondary and renew'd Ones, which maintain that Right.

(6. A Right to the Kingdom of Heaven gives Persons a legal Admission into it, *Rev. xxii. 14. Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may*

may have a Right to the Tree of Life, and enter in through the Gates into the City. This is so express'd, to denote the free Access and legal Admission of those into Heaven that obey God's Commands. We might add further.

(7. To clear up our Right to Heaven, we should, 1. Get the Badges and Characters of it made more legible upon us, and drawn in brighter Lines; divest ourselves, put off all that is unlike to Heaven; and assume and acquire celestial Qualities. Being array'd in divine Excellencies, will assuredly open the Gates of that blessed City for our Entrance. The sanctify'd and renew'd Mind and Understanding is only able to behold God, and the sanctify'd Will and Affections only capable to enjoy him. Such Things as these are certain Forerunners of Happiness, Testimonies of future Glory. 2. Be more with God and in Heaven while we are on Earth, less absent from him, and more in his Presence. The Company we keep here, the Society we frequent now, the same shall we have in the Life to come. They that establish a Friendship and keep up Communion with God through Christ in this World, shall have a free Entrance to a full Communion with him in Glory hereafter. 3. Studying to do all in an Agreeableness to that World: That our Hearts, Lives, Worship, Services, Praises and Thanksgivings, may come near the heavenly Pattern: That we have the same Spirit that they are animated with, and reigns in them: The same Work, the same Ends in glorifying God, advancing his Name and Interest in ourselves and the World; more nearly espousing the Religion, Kingdom, Honour and Glory of the Lord Redeemer. 4. Growing and advancing in Piety, Holiness

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and Goodness, and in a closer Union with Christ and Conformity to him, Eph. iv. 15. But speaking the Truth in Love, may grow up into him in all Things. These, together with Aspirations and Breathings after Heaven, with other Things of a like Nature that might be subjoyn'd, will be certain Forerunners and Badges of future Glory. They that are making these their great Concern and Practice, have very lively Evidences in themselves that they shall partake of those great Enjoyments, which Eye has not seen, nor Ear heard, nor has enter'd into the Heart of Man to apprehend and conceive of.

3. THINK what a one this Kingdom of the Lord Redeemer is, and will be in the Fruition of it, that has such an Entrance and Admission into it. How glorious, ravishing and excellent may we suppose the Enjoyment of it will be, seeing they are convoy'd to it in such State and Dignity! As Princes come to their Kingdoms with great Ceremony, are crown'd and install'd with many Honours; so the Godly ride, as in a triumphant Chariot to Heaven. All which intimates that the Entertainment when they come thither will be highly magnificent and sumptuous. Can we think that God carries them thither in such an observable Manner, and that all Things within are not answerable and agreeable thereunto? No doubt but they'll find all bearing a Proportion to it: Nay, we may be sure the Palace will exceed the Way to it. But whither shall I be carried, you'll say? What, into Abraham's Bosom? Yes, and into a better Place, into the Bosom of God, the Redeemer and Sanctifier: That is a Jewish Notion of Heaven, but the latter a Gospel one, a fitter Term for the Christian Church to conceive of Heaven

ven in, The Angels will present you to Christ, and he will receive you at their Hands and present you to the Father ; and what needs more ? Oh what the Saints will meet with there ! where infinite Love will display itself in Instances of the highest Kind for ever, and exhibit greater Things to them in one Moment, than ever it did in all the Way thither, or whilst they were on Earth. How transcending and surpassing all Conceptions will the Godly find the celestial Enjoyments to be at their Arrival there ! Surely none ever form'd too high and great Conceptions of Heaven, but commonly fall short, are defective, narrow and scanty thereabout.

4. And Lastly. Let us apply all this for Comfort under Afflictions, against and in a dying Time and Hour. Was the future State thoroughly believed, and that the Godly are so treated, and have such a Passage to Heaven, and such glorious Enjoyments there, it would yield us great Support in such Exigencies. It's much easier to pass through a dark Night, when such great and glorious Light will break forth and shine upon us so speedily and gloriously ; when such a Day, an everlasting One, will so quickly commence and take Place afterwards. No sooner has Death done its Office, but a true Believer is a Conqueror. When he ceases to live here, he enters upon a Life that is eternal and endless. There is no Comparison betwixt the Bitterness of Death, and the Sweets and Joys of Heaven : The Fears that the former is apt to encrease in us, and the Consolations that the latter affords and administers to us, the Balance is infinitely on the Side of Heaven. What are temporary, nay, momentary Sorrows, to

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Felicities that are eternal. As a Drop is swallow'd up in the Ocean, even so are these in the other. Many, by terminating their Thoughts on Death, and looking no farther, augment their Fears of it; whereas if they would but look beyond it, to those Things that are prepared for, and that shall be bestow'd upon the sincere Lovers of God, they might see what would alleviate and dry up their Tears, and fill them with Joy, Peace, Satisfaction and Consolation: And that this may be so to them, it is only needful that they give Diligence in the Matters of their Salvation, and be found in the Exercise of those Things, that will tend and conduce to their certain and abundant Entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



THE



The Celestial

Work and Worship.

ISAIAH VI. 3.

And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, &c.

C H A P. I.

Three special Considerations of Heaven.

The Difficulty and Usefulness of the present Design. The Opening of the Words.

What the Holiness of God is. The Import and Meaning of the Repetition in the Text.



H A V E chosen these Words to discourse from upon the celestial Employments, Work, and Worship that the Saints and Angels are exercis'd in, and perform to God in that glorious State and World

they dwell in. This is a Subject of a sublime and high Nature, and whereof we can only give

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some rude Draughts. It is easy to give an Account of a Country, its Inhabitants, Customs and Behaviours, where we have been, and that is level with us; but it is difficult to describe one so much above us, that we are such Strangers to, so ignorant of, and so little conversant with. Even thus it is in the present Case. We that dwell in these dark Orbs, are unfit to say any thing of the Regions of Light and Glory above.

THERE are three special Considerations of Heaven :

1. The Place.
2. The Inhabitants.
3. The Work and Performances of it.
Under which I comprehend its Worship and Ministrations.

THESE are all of them material Points of that blessed State; and many have employ'd themselves, to excellent Purposes, about the two former: But the last of them hath been but slenderly touch'd on, most giving us only some transient Glances and Hints of it, telling us that they spend their happy Eternity in singing Praises and Hallelujahs to the blessed Trinity; but few or none descend to Particulars, or speak at large, as they might do, about it.

THIS is a Performance of so high a Nature, that it may startle an unholy Mortal to undertake it, or make any Essays in the Explication of it; and should fill us with Reverence and utmost Caution, lest any thing should be said unbecoming and unsuitable to that blessed State and World, where all Things are perform'd and managed in compleat Perfection.

YET it must be acknowledged it's a Subject very desirable, and that we should have a great Affection

Affection to some Knowledge of, in order to the enkindling our Love, and enflaming our Hearts towards that World, and making us more desirous to go thither. How gladly would the devout Jews have been admitted into, and seen the Worship perform'd in the *Holy of Holies* (if it had been lawful)! which was but a Type or faint Resemblance of the celestial One, and infinitely inferior to it: And should not the like, nay, greater Ambition be working in us to get some Intelligence of that Place and Work that so far exceeds it; and is what we ourselves must bear a Part in, in a little While, if we be true Believers, the Children of that World? Oh that I could represent these great Things to your Faith, and give you some believing Views of them! Shew you the ravishing Sight of these innumerable Worshippers, their Exercises and Ministriations!

But to the Words. We have this Doxology, or Form of Worship, twice in the Scriptures. In *Rev. iv. 8.* The Generality of Interpreters understand that Text of the Worship of the Gospel-Church: I had rather (with Submission) say, that it is a Draught of celestial Worship, and made a Pattern of that Worship which the Gospel-Church ought, and is directed to perform to God in this World, and probably is an Allusion to, and taken from our Text. The other Place is this before us: Which is expressly meant of the Worship of Heaven, or that which Angels and Saints pay to God there. True, the Jewish Temple is the Place of this Representation and Vision; but it is properly a Form of heavenly Worship, and it is the Seraphims or Angels that utter it, *Above it stood the Seraphims, and one cried unto another, Ver. 2.*

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THIS glorious Scene and Vision was design'd as a Prelude to that Work of Judgment which God was now approaching and hastening to the Execution of, *viz.* His avenging himself of, and punishing the Jewish Nation: Which Work he prefaces with this majestick Appearance, to strike the Jews into an Awe and Terror of it. And hence it is that the Prophet tells us, that *the Posts of the Doors of the Temple were shaken and removed;* thereby intimating to us, that they were hastening to Ruin.

ANGELS are call'd Seraphims, Angels of Fire, *flammantes, ignei,* burning, fiery or flaming, from the Root *Saraph,* which signifies *to burn;* *Psalm civ. 4. He maketh his Angels Spirits: his Ministers a flaming Fire.* Now this intimates to us either, 1. Their Nature: Which is bright and glorious, subtle, pure and spiritual, like Fire. Or, 2. It imports their fervent Zeal in-and for God's Service and Glory. This is Work they are swallow'd up in. Or, 3. Their Office and present Employment: Which was to execute God's Vengeance on the Jews, and burn them up like Droſs. Such Beings as these are the Ministers of the celestial Court, the Attendants upon the Throne of God and the Lamb; and with the Services of such is it surrounded and encompaſſ'd. We must not consider these as some of the prime Ministers of Heaven, but that the heavenly Court is made up of such; and that all that perform the Work and Offices of that glorious Temple are alike unto them; where all are such, and none much inferior to one another.

WE may then call the Words the triumphant Song of Heaven; an Epitomy of celestial Worship, containing the Essence, Form, or Abstract

of

of it: And tho' it be short, yet it shews and gives us some Idea of the voluminous Duties and Worship of those Regions, that's multiplied or swells into Infinity, both as to the Number of Worshippers, and the Performances and Acts of their Worship; for they rest not Day nor Night from rendering their Homages and Acknowledgments, cease not paying their most profound Adorations to the blessed Trinity. But particularly.

1. HERE is the Object, or Subject-Matter of their Worship and Performances, They celebrate the Holiness of God; *Holy, holy, holy.* This is one of the glorious Themes of the celestial Worship, the Holiness of the blessed Trinity: This is that Perfection that they are struck into an Admiration of; and from this we may infer, that the other of the divine Excellencies are the Matter of their Hymns and Praises likewise: For there was a peculiar Reason why the Seraphims touch upon this String and Key at this Time, *viz.* to demonstrate his Holiness, and justify him in the judicial Proceedings he was now going to enter upon.

2. THE Harmony of their Worship. They all joyn in one and the same Subject, sing one and the same Song: And why may not this Rule obtain in the celestial Regions, amongst the Quires and Assemblies of the Blessed above! They sing in Consort the Praises of the Lord in Heaven. The Songs and Praises of Heaven are a perfect Symphony: They are united in their Hearts and in their Hymns. To which we may subjoyn their Excitations of each other hereunto, *One cried unto another;* in the Original it is, *This cried to this.* They animate one another in the holy Work; and so should true Worshippers

shippers do on Earth; help, by their spiritual Warmth, to kindle and blow up Flames in each others Breasts.

3. *WE* may add to this, their Preparations hereunto: The Manner of their Performance of this Service; or, The Posture they discharge it in. We have this in the foregoing Verse, *With twain he cover'd his Face, with twain he cover'd his Feet, and with twain he did fly.*

WITH twain he cover'd his Face.] Out of profound Reverence, as being sensible of the Distance that there was between God and him: intimating, That the Angels dare not presume to look directly upon him; as judging themselves neither able nor worthy to behold the Brightness of his Glory, or bear the Light of the Knowledge of it. Like as *Moses*, of whom it is said, *Exod. iii. 6.* that *he hid his Face, and was afraid to look upon God*: Or, as *Stephen* expresses it, *Acts vii. 32.* that *he trembled, and durst not behold.* It is not strange that sinful Mortals should do thus; but that spotless Creatures should do it, is the greater Wonder. Oh that this might shame us for our Irreverence before the Lord, and teach us to make these blessed Spirits Patterns of Imitation herein!

WITH twain he cover'd his Feet.] This may note a Sense of their natural Infirmities, and a Desire that God would not too severely examine their Ways and Actions.

AND with twain he did fly.] This imports their great Promptness, Forwardness, and Expediteness in all divine Services; and in the Execution of all God's Commands, that are appointed and enjoyn'd them.

To this Doxology there is a glorious Character or Title of God annex'd. In the *Revelations*

lations it is, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.* His Holiness and Power are there conjoyn'd. Here it is, *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts:* Where his Holiness, Dominion and Sovereignty, are put together; *q. d.* Thou art Lord of all the Armies of Heaven and Earth, of heavenly Hosts and terrestrial Ones. Thus the divine Excellencies are celebrated by Pairs.

THE Perfections of God are the special Matter and Subjects of celestial Worship, that of Angels and Saints; or more particularly thus: The Holiness of God is one of those glorious Perfections that is celebrated and ador'd in Heaven; that for which he is lov'd and prais'd by Angels and Saints. This is one amongst the many glorious Strings they are touching and making Melody upon in that World. This Perfection is very resplendent in Heaven in Conjunction with the rest. The Angels had and do always see it gloriously display'd there, and had celebrated it above. It was a Song they were not Strangers to. The blessed Spirits admire and adore God because of the Excellencies of his Nature, as well as for the Benefits they receive from him.

IF one Perfection be celebrated, then we may infer the rest are so likewise; not only in the gross or generally, but particularly and distinctly, apart from the rest, according to the Displays and Manifestations of them. As God shines forth and opens himself in his Glory to the Blessed, accordingly is he prais'd and magnify'd by them. The Rules of the celestial Worship are deriv'd and drawn from the Discoveries of himself to them.

HIS Holiness, as well as his other Excellencies, is the Wonder of Angels: Those glorious Spirits

Spirits admire his Beauty, which is his Holiness. Holiness attends upon his Throne, and fills his Habitation, *Isa. lxiii. 15.* where Heaven is call'd the *Habitation of his Holiness and his Glory.* This is an Argument fit for a Seraphim, and becomes an Angel's Mouth rather than Man's.

Quest. 1. *What is the Holiness of God?*

Ans. S O M E call the Holiness of God the Excellency of all his other Excellencies: But, to speak more closely, and to Purpose, it is the Rectitude and Purity of his Nature, or a divine Attribute, by which we understand his Essence to be most perfectly just and pure, and that which sets him at the utmost Distance from Sin and Weakness; loving and liking himself above all, and the Creatures as they do more or less partake of his Glory. Sometimes it is call'd the divine Nature, *2 Pet. i. 4.* *Whereby are given unto us great and precious Promises; that by these you might be Partakers of the divine Nature.* Or we may conceive it to be that glorious Perfection which diffuses itself through and overspreads the divine Essence, and is darted forth from it, as the Beams do from the Sun, the Rays of which are seen in the visible Heavens, and are scatter'd through the wide Creation, but are most resplendent, powerful, and glorious in the Heavens: Even so the Holiness of God is conspicuous in his Works, but shines forth most gloriously in himself, and his immediate Communications in Heaven. This is the divine Impres's he has enstamp'd upon his Creation, but especially upon Angels and Men. His Holiness shines forth in his Word, his Laws and Covenant, as also in his Government and Providence, *Psalm cxlv. 17.* *He is righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works.* He governs a sinful,

sinful, unholy World, in an holy Manner. Even as the Sun-Beams are not defiled by shining upon filthy Dunghills; so the Holiness of God is unspotted in its Managements of a sinful World. And he is holy in his Judgments and Executions. Those that lye under the greatest Punishments, cannot bring a Charge of Unrighteousness and Unholiness against him. In a Word, Of all these scatter'd Streams and Rays of Holiness, God himself is the Center, the infinite Source and Fountain.

Quest. 2. *WHAT is the Import and Meaning of the Repetition, Holy, holy, holy, in the Text.*

Ans. We must not think that this is without an observable Emphasis and Importance. One Repetition of a Word is remarkable, much more a treble One. Considering withal, that we cannot find an Instance parallel to it in all the Scriptures, except that in the *Revelations* foremention'd, which is the same with it, and therefore it is very reasonable that we consider the Force and Importance of it.

1. It holds forth to us the deep Impression they had of this Perfection upon them; their great Affection to and Admiration of it, and the Pleasure and Delight they took in it: The Lustre of God's Holiness had long dazled their Minds. They speak of it as those that had seen the glorious Manifestations of it, and had their Hearts sensibly and deeply touch'd with it. In Heaven there are more lively and perfect Engravings of the divine Excellencies upon blessed Spirits than elsewhere. Some holy Men have had much of the Impress of this Perfection upon them; but how much more must we suppose they above have of it, who come nearer the Original than all others do?

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They speak of it here, as what they had felt, and were under the greatest Weight and Sense of. Every Attribute shines forth in its full Lustre, and so does that of his Holiness; which, as we may say, intermixes itself with all the rest, or is an Ingredient of them. Oh what ravishing Views have they hereof! And this is what begets such powerful Impressions of it upon them.

To be possessed herewith is a special Qualification and Requisite of a Worshipper of an holy God. The greater Impress is made upon any from the Objects of Worship, so much the fitter they are for sacred Performances: And therefore this is one thing we should labour after in all our Approaches to God, Get ourselves affected with his Excellencies after the Manner that we find these blessed Worshippers were in the Instance before us. Oh the happy Patterns of Worship that may be drawn from above!

2. It notes to us the Superlative and Exceeding Holiness of God: The Perfection and Greatness of it. Its Spotlessness without any Allays or contrary Mixtures; Holy, Holy, Holy, q. d. God is the most holy One, and infinitely above all others, so as none besides him are, *1 Sam. ii. 2. there is none holy as the Lord.* God is essentially holy, originally holy, and infinitely holy; and not only holy, but Holiness itself. Hitherto we may apply that of the Psalmist, *Ps. lxxxix. 6. Who in the Heavens can be compared to the Lord? Who among the Sons of the mighty can be compared to the Lord?* The Holiness of the purest Creatures is but as a Ray borrowed and derived from the great God, or like a Drop from the Ocean; but he is a Fountain, in him dwells the Fulness of it: In the best of Creatures

Creatures it is but a communicated Quality, but in God it is his Essence, the divine Nature itself. Hence is that of Prophet *Habakkuk* i. 2. *Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine holy One?* We have not Expressions superlative and large enough to set forth his exceeding Holiness in, and therefore they encrease the Sense of the sacred Language, heap the same Words one upon another, repeat them oft for the heightening of them, and giving them a greater Emphasis. Nay, was this Tris-hagion multiplied into Thousands, yet it would not wholly set forth the Greatness of God's Holiness. Hither-to we may refer those Expressions, *Job* iv. 18. *Behold he put no Trust in his Servants; and his Angels he charges with Folly.* And that Chap. xxv. 5. *Behold, even to the Moon and it shineth not; and the Heavens are not pure in his Sight.* The Holiness of the highest Creatures to God, is not so much as the Light of a Glow-worm to the Sun; nay, is Dust, Darkness and Impurity to it. How does this give Occasion for unholy Worms to cry out of the Transcendency and Excellency of the Holiness of the Great God!

3. THIS Form of Praise of the Angels, has Respect to the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit; to let us see that they are equally adorable, alike Objects of Worship, and that all three partake of this glorious Excellency in the same Degree with one another. We may ask, Why is there a threefold Ascription of Holiness to them, and why but three and no more, and which is observable, it is the same in the *Revelations* Chap. iv. 8. and in one Edition of the Bible, it is repeated nine Times, as if they were delighted with the Mention of it? Each Person

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of the blessed Trinity has a distinct and personal Holiness and Glory, peculiar to each of them, which is a just Ground of the Ascription of Holiness particularly unto them. *Math. xvi. 27. The Son of Man shall come in the Glory of the Father. John xvii. 5. Glorify thou me with thine ownself, with the Glory which I had with thee before the World was.* The Scripture ascribes to him a peculiar Glory of his own, as well as one to God the Father. And we may suppose that it is the same with the holy Spirit, who has the same Attributes ascribed to him as the other Persons have. And as there has been distinct Manifestations of the Blessed Trinity here below, we may very well conclude there will be distinct and various Manifestations of them in Heaven.

To conclude. This, *viz.* the Holiness of God is one of those Glorious Perfections we should possess our Souls with a deep Sense of, and endeavour that it may have a transforming Power upon us, and some Shadows of it shed upon and communicated to us.



CHAP. II.

Arguments to prove a celestial Worship; or, that the blessed Spirits will be exercis'd in Worship and sacred Employments there. Heaven consider'd under the Notion of a Temple. The Jewish Temple a Type of Heaven, &c. The Explication of John iv. 2. In my Father's House are many Mansions.

HAVING in the foregoing Meditations open'd the Words, and laid some Foundations for a Superstructure, we shall more particularly address ourselves to the Subject in Hand, and give some Proofs and Evidences of it from the following Heads or Considerations. And,

1. IN order hereunto, we shall consider Heaven under the Notion of a glorious Palace or Temple, as the Throne or Place of Residence of the Great God, that he has chosen for his special Inhabitation and Abode; where he displays himself in glorious Manifestations to those he has chosen to attend upon and dwell with him there, to be Partakers of his Communications, Favours, and glorious Privileges.

TRUE, as to the Immensity and Infinite-ness of the divine Being and Majesty, the

Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him, 2 Chron. ii. 6. In which Sense he fills Heaven and Earth, and is diffus'd through and overspreads all Space beyond and within the created World. Yet we are taught to believe, and must conceive of God as peculiarly possessing and filling Heaven, which is the most magnificent and glorious Part of the Creation, and therefore prepared and built for his especial and immediate Residence. And hence it is that the Prophet *Isaiah lxvi. 1.* tells us, that *Heaven is his Throne;* and *Chap. lvii. 15.* that God saith of himself, *I dwell in the high and holy Place.* And thus the Scripture teaches us to believe concerning him. There he dwells in a Manner suitable to the Infinity of his Nature; and it is from thence that divine Manifestations are made to this lower World.

THIS glorious and celestial Palace was erected and built for excellent Ends and Purposes. Besides what we have already hinted we may add, to be a Place of Worship, of sacred Exercises and Celebrations of his Perfections; where he will be served in the highest Manner, and not with those Infirmities and Weaknesses as he is here below, and receive the Acknowledgments of his Servants, and so as that the great Ends of Worship may be attain'd. True, the whole World is God's Temple at large, wherein he is to be worshipped; but Heaven is in an especial and peculiar Sense and Manner so. Now the primary Notion and Use of a Temple is, that it is a Place appointed for such sacred Purposes. In other Temples the Church Militant meets together in distinct Bodies and Assemblies; but Heaven is a Temple for the Church Triumphant, and where all the Members

Members of Christ shall be congregated and be together, and serve God constantly and perpetually without Interruption or Cessation. The Services and Worship perform'd in this Temple will bear a Proportion and be agreeable to the Excellency of the Fabrick, be august and glorious like unto it. Here it is that that Scripture will be fulfill'd which some think is spoke of the heavenly State, or however holds forth something of it by way of Allusion to it, *Rev. vii. 15, 16, 17.* *They are before the Throne of God, and serve him Day and Night in his Temple; and he that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the Sun light on them, or any Heat: For the Lamb that is in the Midst of the Throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to living Fountains of Waters, and God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes.* These Words do manifestly run in an heavenly Style and Form, and do evidently point at Heaven, and are absolutely and ultimately fulfill'd and made good there.

2. THIS Truth is yet further confirm'd and prov'd from the Consideration of the Jewish Temple, which was a Type of Heaven: And that as to the Place itself, the Furniture and Ornaments of it, and the Use it was applied to, all carried a spiritual Signification and Meaning in it. Heaven was the original Model, by which the Temple was drawn and form'd: The Edifice was most splendid and magnificent, had the greatest Beauty and Glory given it, that humane Art was capable of adorning it withal: It was overlaid with pure Gold, and Images of Cherubims, the Ministers of the celestial Temple, were drawn and carved upon the Doors and Walls of it: But most especially was the

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Holy of Holies a lively Representation of Heaven. Here God was said to have his Residence between the Cherubims, Psal. lxxx. 1. Here was the *Schecinah*, the Tokens of God's Presence and Residence. So there was the *Mercy-Sear*, on which God was conceived to dwell, from whence he made his Appearances, and gave Responses and Answers to the Chief-Priest. Answerable and parallel to which there is a Throne of Grace, or Throne of Glory, in Heaven, stil'd *the Throne of God and the Lamb*, Rev. xxii. 3. And from this sacred Apartment of the Temple the *Holy of Holies*, which was unapproachable to all but the High-Priest; hence is, I say, the Notion that some have of a Superintellectual Heaven, or *Sanctum Sanctorum*; which, they tell us, is solely appropriated to the Deity, and is peculiarly the Residence of the divine Majesty: Which some call the *Adytum*, or inmost Apartment of the Heavens, where the Throne of the Majesty on high is seated, and the *φῶς ἀπέριττον*, the unapproachable Light shines; 1 Tim. vi. 16. *Who only hath Immortality dwelling in the Light, which no Man can approach unto.* Answerable hereunto is that Expression speaking of our blessed Saviour's Ascension, Eph. iv. 10. that he *ascended up far above all Heavens.* By which superlative Expression some understand the highest Paradise, that Habitation of Light, that Light inaccessible; the Kingdom of Heaven, not the Suburbs and outward Courts of it, but the *Holy of Holies*.

But besides the Place, the Furniture and Materials, or Utensils, of the Temple were Types of Heaven: Hence they are call'd *Patterns of Things in the Heavens*, Heb. ix. 33. and in the following Verse, *Figures of the True*, i. e. of

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of the real *Holy of Holies*, Resemblances of the true, holy, and glorious Place of God's Residence. We might instance in many Things. The Temple had an High-Priest ; so it is in Heaven, our Lord Redeemer is the glorious High-Priest of that glorious World. Thus the Burning of the Incense was a lively Emblem of Christ's Intercession there. To which we might subjoyn the Services of the Temple, its Worship, the Orders and Stations of the Priests and People. Here they stood in their Courses, distinct Courts and Mansions, and worshipped and sang the Praises of the Lord in great Numbers, both Priests and People. All which is a lively Resemblance of the Worship of Heaven, and of the Work that blessed Angels and Saints are there employ'd in. As the Temple echo'd with their sweet Sounds and Voices, even so it is in Heaven ; yea, much more so, even beyond Conception and Expression.

But as there is a Resemblance, so there is a Dissimilitude betwixt the terrestrial and celestial Temple : The Antitype quite excells the Type. All the Glory and Richness of the former Temple was but Darkness veil'd with a Cloud, compar'd with the Glory of Heaven, where God manifests himself in glorious Light. The *Jewish* Temple was made with Hands, but that above was the Workmanship of God himself : That stood but some few Ages, the other is to abide, not only for long Periods, but for ever ; and no Time or Ages can demolish, deface or impair it. But yet it is a Figure, and shews us something of the heavenly Temple, what it is built for, and what Uses it is to be put to, *viz.* to be a Place for the Services and Ministrations of blessed Spirits, and that for ever.

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ANGELS and Saints have great Endowments, and are eminently furnish'd for high and excellent Employments. We may call them the *Chief of the Ways of God*. I allude to *Job* xl. 19. The Highest of created Beings, and that are placed in the most glorious Stations, must certainly have the greatest Perfections, and the Work and Services assign'd them bear a Correspondence thereunto. We might here consider, that their vital, active Powers are strong and vigorous; their Minds are fill'd with divine and heavenly Light, without any Mixtures of Darkness and Error; they have great Measures of Subjective Light, and glorious Beams of objective Light, continually shining upon them from the great Fountain of it, the ever-blessed Trinity; and their Wills and Affections are answerable, being fill'd with holy Rectitude and Willingness, and with all suitable Graces, in the highest Degrees. But of this Subject we shall have occasion to say something afterwards; only by the Way we may see how strong the Argument is for the Proof of what we have under our present Consideration. Now some Way or other these must be employ'd, and certainly in doing the Work of Heaven.

4. THE Blessed in Heaven do perfectly attain, fulfil, and execute the Ends of their Beings; what they were created and preserved for. You will be ready to enquire what it is for a Creature to attain its End? Why this lies in its being perfected in its Powers, Capacities, Operations and Happiness, and in being exercis'd in perfect Services to its Creator; in pleasing and loving God, and being pleas'd in him, and lov'd of him; in doing the whole Will of God, and obeying his Commands. *Matth. vi. 10. Thy Will*

Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. This Scripture shews us something of the Laws of that blessed World, which those glorious Beings live in the Observance and Execution of. Now as the more any Creature is gone off from the End of its Being, the less of Duty and Service it renders to God; so the more it returns to its Center and the End of its Creation, consequently so much the more of Service and Worship it performs unto him, as is manifest in those that are in this Life advancing in Grace towards Perfection. And this is the very Case of the Blessed in Heaven. They are perfectly fitted for his Service, for celestial Work, and perfectly perform and execute it; and so are, above all others, exercis'd and employ'd therein: And herein consists the Reason and End of their Being.

THERE is a Will of God to be executed, done and fulfill'd in Heaven, as well as one that belongs to this World; and in the doing of this they are employ'd and spend their blessed Eternity. Now this Will has many Parts, or several Branches, all which are punctually executed and perform'd by them.

5. THE Blessed in Heaven constitute and form the Church Triumphant. God has one Church in Heaven, and another on Earth, and both have their appointed Work; and whilst the one is in Service below, the other is so above, but yet with great Difference and Variety. The Church Triumphant is past, and has done the Work that belongs to the Militant One; but they have enter'd upon other and higher Services, and stand upon eternal Reasons, and therefore shall continue and abide for ever. The Work they perform'd on Earth was but a Leading, and in order to what they are about in

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Heaven; and so they have exchanged their imperfect, for perfect Service; not laid aside, nor ceas'd it. The one do their Work as sojourning, militant Ones, and the other as Triumphers, suitable to the happy State they are exalted to.

But tho' they differ in their Work, yet we cannot think they have less to do than they had on Earth; nay, we have very good Reason to think they have more to do than ever, that their Work is not diminish'd but multiplied upon their Hands, because all their Mercies are compleat-ed, and they find themselves under strong Bonds and Obligations to obey, and please, and glorify God to the utmost of their Capacities.

We might further carry on the Argument we are upon, from what is comprehended in those Words of our blessed Saviour, *John xiv. 2, In my Father's House are many Mansions.*

THESE Words were spoken by one who was very well acquainted with Heaven, and knew most certainly the whole Oeconomy of the heavenly Regions; and they are some of the fullest Words that ever were spoken of it. The Temple had but two Apartments in it, the holy Place, and the *Holy of Holies*; but there are many in Heaven, and so

He does not only tell them there is a Heaven, or a Place of Rest for them in his Father's House, or that his Father's House will be a Heaven to them, which are very comfortable Words; but more than so, That there is a Mansion, nay, many Mansions and Rooms, great Provision made for them in his Father's House. There is not only one Room, but many, many in Christ's Sense, whose Computation is different from ours.

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THE WORDS are full of Emphasis, Christ speaks comfortably of Heaven. The Mansions of it are Mansions of a Father; of a heavenly Father's providing; Mansions of the Father of Christ, and Believers in common. Surely these must needs be excellent Ones!

SEVERAL Things may be observ'd concerning the Importance of the Words, and the Property of these Mansions: As,

1. THE Excellency and Glory of them. His Father's Presence and Glory, together with his own, will cast a ravishing Lustre upon, and diffuse itself thro' them, and make them most desirable Habitations, every Way glorious, and suitable to the Abode of the Saints.

2. THEY import the Fixedness and Permanency of the heavenly State; of the Condition of the Blessed in Heaven, in opposition to the unsettled One his Apostles were in at present; and that all his Followers are in, in this World: *q. d.* Expect no Rest here. But I do promise, and can assure you of an unchangeable One hereafter: Which I am now going to take Possession of, prepare and keep for you till the Time of your Removal thither.

THESE Mansions are not like the temporary Stations of the Jews in the Wilderness, but more resembling their Condition in Canaan, and far excelling it. Heaven is a *Kingdom that cannot be moved*, Heb. xii. 28. a *continuing City*, Chap. xiii. 14. that is built upon a never-failing Rock and Foundation. All other Tenures, Possessions and Habitations are tottering and shaking, but this is not.

3. WE may remark the Number, Multiplicity and Variety of these Mansions. Our blessed Saviour calls them many, and thereby gives us

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us Ground to conclude the Sum of them is very great. From whence he gives us occasion to take up very high and rais'd Apprehensions of Heaven and the heavenly State: And he herein hints to us, that they are amply receptive of those infinite Numbers that are to be Possessors and Enjoyers of them. Thus one; *In my Father's House there are Rooms enough to receive all mine as well as me.* But from God's lower and inferior Works we may make some Guesses what his chiefeſt of all may amount unto. If we will allow and may conclude there is a Proportion observ'd in them, as certainly there is, there must needs be a great Number of them.

But besides the Number, we may note the Variety and Multiplicity of them. Every Mansion has something common to all, and each of them may have some Peculiarities, or something peculiar, and that distinguishes them from the rest. There may be a Difference of Glory in their Mansions, as well as in the Blessed that inhabit and possess them. God can lay additional Lines of Glory upon them; make one exceed another in Glory and Splendor as he pleaseth: And some tell us, that the Expression properly imports several or various Degrees and Stations of Glory, or that the Mansions differ in their Glory in Point of Degrees. Every heavenly Luminary has a several or distinct Embellishment, as one Star differs from another in its Glory, *1 Cor. xv. 41.* And in the like Manner we may think it will be with the Mansions of this glorious Palace, which is the Master-Piece of God's Works: So that there will not be an Equality among them, but an Excess of some in Grandure and Glory above the rest. They will all be glorious, but some will exceed there-
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in, and surpass the rest: Even as it is in the Palace of a Great Prince, which excells in the Variety of its Rooms and Apartments.

4. It notes the Spaciousness and Amplitude of the heavenly Mansions. They are large as well as many. In the Parable of the Gospel-Supper there was room for the Reception of Multitudes after many were come in, *Luke* xiv. 22. how much more spacious may we think those of Heaven will be. We must not estimate the Dimensions of the celestial Mansions by the common Measure of our narrow Capacities; but according to the great Architect and intended Use of them, and as is agreeable to those spacious Regions where they lye, and to which they belong; and if we measure them by these Rules, we must conclude them to be very capacious. Our narrow Minds conceive too largely of earthly Things, and too contractedly of celestial Ones; and hence it is that we are so mistaken in taking the full Dimensions and Extent of them. Should we assign to every Mansion the Amplitude and Extent there is betwixt the Heavens and the Earth, probably our Comparison would rather be dishonourable, and fall short, than exceed. Heaven, the Place of the Blessed, is an high-roof'd, spacious Palace, and its Mansions are high and vastly extended Ones. The Measures of the Sanctuary, or the sacred Ones, exceeded those that were common; much more may we think the celestial Ones do so. Now if we allow so great a Space to a single Mansion, to what an Infinity of Space and Extent must they amount unto in the Whole? Here the Saints are oft pent up in Prisons and narrow Cells; but there will be no such Restraints, nothing but Liberty and Scope above. As the Love of Heaven

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ven is, for the Extent and Immensity of it, the Admiration of the Saints, *Eph.* iii. 18, 19. so may we suppose its purchas'd Mansions will be the same.

5. We may suppose these Mansions will be suitably furnish'd with Inhabitants. Our Lord intimates that they will not be empty, but abundantly replenish'd. It would have been no Comfort to his Disciples to have told them of heavenly Mansions that had nothing in them.

It is in vain to ask whence, and how all these will be furnish'd with Inhabitants. To object that great Numbers of Angels fell; and that the Redeemed and Saved of Mankind, tho' they be many in themselves, yet are but few comparatively to those that perish. And what are these, may it be said, to fill such spacious Mansions, and so many and large as you make them to be? For has not God Ways to replenish and store them with Beings unknown to us? He has reveal'd the heavenly State and World but in part to us; and to suppose them empty, would detract from the Glory of them; for it lessens the Beauty of a Palace to want Inhabitants. And is every Part of the Creation furnish'd, as we find it as far as our Knowledge of it reaches, and can we think the best and chiefest Part of it will not be so? Yes surely. 'Look up (saith one) and think 'whether all those vast and glorious Spaces which 'are above us are likely to be without Inhabitants, when we see every Corner of this lower 'World, both Earth and Water, are inhabited.'

THIS Consideration, (together with what was said under the foregoing Head) among many others, may help to enlarge and raise our Apprehensions of the heavenly State, and shew us the Greatness of it in this as well as other Respects. Let us then

then lay aside all our mean and common Conceptions of so blessed a State and World as Heaven is. When the Godly are removed thither, they find and meet with many Things that are surprizing, and that lay out of the Reach of, and quite beyond all Imagination; every Thing amazing and wonderful.

6. We may observe the Disposition and Order that there will be of the heavenly Hosts of Angels and Saints in these Mansions. There will be wise and different Assignments and Distributions of the Blessed unto them. They will not take up their Places by Chance, but by divine Direction and Disposal: Some will be appointed to one, and some to others, and so it will be with the rest.

We might here speak of the Ranging or Marshalling the heavenly Inhabitants in, these Mansions. They will not be put into them at Random, by Chance, or in a confus'd Manner; but ranged most exactly, and in curious Order, be marshalled beyond what the most regular Armies ever were. The most exact Convention and Assembly of different Honours and Degrees, placed the most accurately, cannot equal them. Now this Consignment of them will be according to what their Holiness, Usefulness and Attainments have been, together with such like Considerations and Reasons. But upon whatsoever Accounts this may turn, we may be sure such a Distribution will be an Addition to the Honour and Glory of that World, that is a World of highest and greatest Order.

We have observed that this will be managed by Rules of infinite Wisdom and Goodness; so that there will be no Ground for any to say, I know not what Mansions I shall be consign'd unto,

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unto, or in which I shall have my Station? For every one shall have the meetest Place appointed them: And there is none that is undesirable in them, nor can there be any Ground of Uneasiness in us thereabouts, for there will be an entire Satisfaction in all the Saints as to this Matter.

HITHERTO we may refer the Answer of Christ to the Petition of the Mother of Zebedee's Children, put to him on their Behalf, *Matth. xx. 20, 21, 23.* *Then came to him the Mother of Zebedee's Children, with her Sons, desiring a certain Thing of him: Grant that these my two Sons may sit, the one on thy right Hand, the other on thy left, in thy Kingdom.* To which Christ answers, *To sit on my right Hand, and on my left, is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.* The true rendering of this Text, according to the Original, runs thus: *It is not mine to give, save to those for whom it is prepared of my Father.* In which we see he asserts, that it is his Province to dispose of Places of Felicity, and that he must do it according to his Father's Will; not for outward Respects, but as God has given to every Man his Measure, he should bestow them as his Father had appointed him: So that in this he is govern'd exactly by the Measures of his Father's Purpose. As the common Salvation, so the more peculiar Honours of Glory are appointed; the whole Affair is long since settled. This is a very comfortable Doctrine for Believers, that the Disposal of Souls in Glory is in the Hands of the Lord Redeemer.

FROM what has been said, there seems to be Ground to distinguish these Mansions into those of the Old Testament Saints, and those of the New Testament Ones, into Mansions for Patriarchs,

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triarchs, and Mansions for Prophets; Mansions for Apostles, Martyrs and Confessors; into Mansions of Saints of higher and lower Degrees of Attainments and Glory; Mansions of Believers of the same or different Ages: With other unknown Rules, which lye out of the Reach of our dark Conceptions.

YET we must take heed of forming unsuitable Apprehensions of the Subject in hand. We do not say that the Saints will be so confin'd to their several Mansions, as not to change them, or remove from them to others, and that upon Grounds and Reasons unknown to us; nor must we think that their Residence in their several Mansions will make them Strangers to, or unacquainted with the other Mansions and Parts of Heaven; nor that these Mansions make a Partition there to obstruct the Vision or Communion of the Blessed with each other: No; but that there will be different and several Assemblies and Congregations of Saints in Glory seems to be evident hence. For we may imagine every Mansion will be a several Temple, where the glorious Offices of Honour, Veneration and Praise, will be offer'd and presented to the blessed Father, Son and Spirit.

7. THE last Thing to be consider'd is the Employment and Work they will have in these Mansions. These will be as so many Temples (as we have just observ'd) consecrated to the Service of the blessed Trinity. In these Stations and Capacities, as thus distributed and posited, will Angels and Saints perform the Services of the celestial Regions that are appointed them. None of them will be unemploy'd: They are not put into such Mansions to be idle, to dream out their Eternity in doing nothing; but

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but to be exercis'd, without ceasing, in Services of the highest Nature.

THESE Considerations open to us a glorious Prospect of Things, help us to excellent Conceptions of Heaven. What an Heart-enflaming Subje&t is this! To behold these innumerable, orderly Assemblies in these Mansions, not only prepared for, but actually employ'd in the highest Ministrations, how ravishing is it, and how proper to quicken all our Powers! What glorious Patterns are these to follow in our religious Performances!

To conclude the Whole. Thus we see by the foregoing Arguments how evident it is that Heaven is a Place of excellent and great Employments: A glorious Temple, where the highest Services are tender'd and presented to the blessed Father, Son and Spirit: And in what Disposition and Order (the best that can be) the Assemblies of glorified Spirits are and will be put into for that Work. These are those great Things which gracious Persons should be aspiring towards, and endeavouring to form themselves in Suitableness unto; that they may at the appointed Season, enter upon that happy State, and be admitted into the Number of those blessed Ones, who shall have their everlasting Residence and Abode in those glorious Mansions.



C H A P.



C H A P. III.

Where we shall state the Nature of Worship in General. The Consideration of Worship in an imperfect and perfect State. Wherein the Perfection of the celestial Services consist. Of the Fitness of glorified Spirits for that Work.

THE Creatures, even the sensitive Ones, discover some Notices of Respect and Honour to a Deity upon them: But the more we ascend in the Scale and Line of created Beings, we shall find they have so much the more lively and deep Impressions of a Reverence and Regard of God, and of an Acknowledgment of him. Thus it was with Man at first, above all the Creatures below him. The Sense of his Creator, and of his Obligations to him, was deeply engraven upon his Mind in Innocency: But his dreadful Apostacy weaken'd and obliterated this in a great Degreee. Yet as he recovers and rises out of his Degeneracy, accordingly is this restor'd and renew'd in him. But above all, glorified Angels and Saints excel herein. It is their very Nature and Work to fear and reverence, and acknowledge and adore the Lord. This is Work they

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are employ'd in, and from which they have no Avocations and Diversions; that Badge of Honour they have upon them more than any of their Fellow-Creatures.

Now divine Worship may be comprehended in these two following Generals.

1. IN right Apprehensions of the Object of Worship, and due Impressions of it upon us. This is the first Article and Ingredient of sacred Worship, and supposes the Qualification and State of the Mind of the Worshipper, its Rectitude and Suitableness for such high Work. The Worship of a Person carries a Correspondence with his Apprehensions of the Deity, and its Impressions upon him. False Apprehensions lay a Ground of a false Worship; low and mean Ones of a Worship agreeable thereunto: Truer Ones are a Ground of right Worship; and higher and more perfect Ones are a Reason of a perfect One. Amongst which we may reckon blessed Angels and Saints, who excel herein, and have the most glorious and lively Ideas and Impressions of a holy God upon 'em: Of which the Text is a Witness.

THIS then we may assert to be a general Rule and Maxim of Worship, and holds good both of the Worship of Heaven and Earth, and is what every one may experience and find true in themselves; for according to our Conceptions of God, and Impressions from him, our religious Performances ebb and flow, rise or fall, are dull or lively; come the nearest to, correspond and agree most with, or are most remote from, the Precepts and Rules of divine Worship.

AND this is what in other Terms we call the Mind's being possess'd, fill'd with, or lying under the Influence of the Object we Worship; when

when the Glories and Excellencies of the ever-blessed God lye as a Weight upon the Soul. And hence is it that some observe the Hebrew Word *Cabud*, which we render *Glory*, signifies likewise a *Weight*; intimating to us, that the superlative Glory of the divine Nature (when duly apprehended) is to the Soul, or hath the like Effect upon it, as a Weight is to the Body, which naturally produces a Succumbency, and works it into a religious Prostration, and great Veneration of the Object in the inward Man. And this Impression of God, when it becomes as an Habit and holy Nature in us, is the constant Principle of spiritual Operation and sacred Worship; and is that holy and happy Temper of Soul which we would recommend to all godly Persons, and which we find holy Men in Scripture possess'd of in their Worshipping of God. Of which *Abraham*, *Job*, *David*, and many others, are Witnesses and Instances: But most especially, and to the highest Degree, is it so in Heaven.

2. It consists in sacred Operations and Exercises upon the Deity or Object of Worship: And hence it is that some call divine Worship a Complication of sacred Acts directed towards and terminated upon God, and which have a Relation and Respect to an infinitely worthy Being as the Center of them; and are justly call'd sacred Ones from the Nature, Kind, and Degree of them, and because they are peculiar and appropriate to the Deity, and are such as no Creature can make any just Claim to. Now these Acts may be consider'd, either, (1.) As Inward; Or, (2.) As Outward.

(1.) As Inward, and as lying in the Mind of the Worshipper: Which is that we call internal

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nal Worship; and they are such as these: A profound Estimation, a holy Veneration, a deep Reverence and great Love of God, a pious Fear and honourable Apprehensions of him, with such like Operations. *Isa. viii. 13. Sanctify the Lord God of Hosts in your Heart, and let him be your Fear, and let him be your Dread.* These are such essential Ingredients of Worship, that they are sometimes put for the Whole of it, the Thing itself. Thus that which *Moses* calls Fear, *Deut. vi. 13. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him.* That, I say, Christ terms Adoration, *Mat. iv. 10. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God.* And the Chaldee Word *Dechal* signifies both to fear and to worship. Now amongst the several Acts of Worship we might particularly mention Self-Abasement and Self-Abhorrence; or a Sense of our own Meanness, Emptiness and Vileness. Thus when *Abraham* is pleading with God, he calls himself *Dust and Ashes*, *Gen. viii. 27. The like to which is that of* *Job xlii. 5, 6. I have heard of thee by the Hearing of the Ear; but now mine Eye sees thee: Wherefore I abhor my self,* &c. And that of the Prophet *Isaiah*, 5th Verse of this Chapter, *I am undone, because I am a Man of unclean Lips; for mine Eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.* Now this is produced by the Rays of the Glory and Brightness of the divine Majesty, some Reflections thereof darted or cast forth upon a Person, whereby the affected Soul stoops and sinks as it were into Nothingness before a Great and Holy God; even as the lesser Lights withdraw and gather in their Rays before the Sun. This is a very excellent Act and Branch of Worship; and what we find, not only in the best Worshippers on Earth, but in the Blessed in Heaven, and that in a far greater Degree.

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Degree than any below are capable of. Thus the Verse before the Text, *With twain he cover'd his Feet*: They exalt him in their own Abasement. So in *Psalm xcvi. 7.* what is translated *Worship him all ye Gods*, is in the Original, *Bow down to him all ye Elohim*. Those that understand this, and practise accordingly, are true and acceptable Worshippers of God; for these Graces shew the true Posture, State and Workings of a Person's Heart: Such as these are lively Expressions of, and suitable Answers to the divine Excellencies, the Greatness and Holiness of God, and shew how we are and ought to be affected with them. The Exercise of these is the Soul's Entertainment of God, and a becoming Homage paid to him.

(2.) **BESIDES** Inward, there are Outward Acts of Worship, or that which we call external Worship, which is the Expression of what is in the Heart. We cannot conceive of these as separate from the former, but as intermixt with them, seeing they are related as Streams to the Fountain, and are the very Life and animating Principle of the latter, and should always accompany and go along with them: Both these together do compleat divine Worship. Now these Outward Acts of Worship lye in the following Particulars :

1.) **I**N religious Addresses and Applications to God for Blessings, in Intercourse and Communion with him. The Ground of these are the Cure of our Maladies, the Supply of our Wants, and the Derivation of all good Things upon us. We may resemble our devout Approaches to God to our going to a Fountain, Ocean, or Treasury of all Fulness and Excellencies for Supplies. We must be fully perswaded

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ded that he is all these in himself, and will be so to devout and humble Suppliants: *Heb. xi. 6.*
He that cometh to God, must believe that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him. And on the other Hand, we should carry upon our Hearts a Sense of our extreme Indigencies and Emptinesses, and exercise a Dependance on him for Relief, that all needful Blessings and Communications may be derived from him, and all our Wants made up in him abundantly. Upon this Account it is that sacred Worship is frequently call'd *a Seeking of God.* And this Branch of Worship we call Supplication.

To this we may subjoyn those great Privileges of Intercourse and Communion with God. In the Way of Worship we do not only draw near to him, but he is pleas'd to open himself to, and scatter of his sweet and reviving Beams upon us. Hence some resemble Prayer and Communion with God therein, to Letters of Communication that pass betwixt Heaven and Earth; or call it an holy Art of Merchandizing betwixt God and Man; or compare it to a Vessel, that sails from Earth to Heaven, and back again, that we send forth with Desires and Requests, and returns loaden with Blessings and good Things. Aflurely it is that by which a happy and advantagious Correspondence is maintain'd betwixt God and his Creatures. And this is one great End of Worship, *viz.* to establish a gracious Communion betwixt him and us: Which on our Part is the Entertainment of him in the Soul, from whence results and flows Joy, Delight, Spiritual Pleasure and Satisfaction.

THE former Branch of Worship, *viz.* Application to God for Blessings is compatible to the

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the highest Creatures, tho' not in the same Manner or like Degree with others. Angels and glorified Saints have not the same Wants that we lye under; yet they are dependant Beings, and live by continual Influxes both of Nature and Grace from God. Divine Emanations and Communications are the Life and Happiness of those blessed Spirits. Their Beings, and all the glorious Advantages of them are borrow'd and deriy'd from the great and common Fountain of Being, and need Supplies from it: So that they cannot but desire the Continuance of their Supports and Comforts, and some Way or other make Expressions and Significations of their Desire of the continued Fruition and full Completion of them.

AND the latter Branch, that of Intercourse and Communion with God, most eminently agrees to them, above all others. The Token of God's Acceptance of *Jewiſh* Worship was by Fire from Heaven, 2 Cor. vii. 1. but their Performances above are anſwer'd with the most glorious Displays and Ravishments of the divine Favours. Here below we have but now and then a Beam of Love and Joy cast into the Soul; as a comfortable Answer of our Worship; but they have nothing else but Communion with God, and their Performances are a Means leading to it, and the Continuance of it.

2.) IN an Acknowledgment of the glorious Perfections, Relations and Works of God, and in due Returns unto them. Divine Worship imports a reverential Acknowledgment of the super-eminent Worth and Excellency of its Object, and is the Ground and Reason of it. Now these Acknowledgments are either of God's universal Excellencies, and General; as, his Majesty, Glory, Holiness, Immensity, Infinity, &c.

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one of his particular Attributes, his Wisdom, Power, Goodness, Mercy, all which he possesses in a superlative and transcendent Degree. When we meet with a few Excellencies, tho' limited and finite, they are apt to excite a Veneration and Reverence in us to a Person: How much more is there a greater Reason it should do so, where we find all Perfections centering and meeting in one Being, as it is in the Great God; every thing that may beget Admiration, and where there is nothing to allay or cloud the Glory of them. These Perfections then, whether consider'd jointly or singly, are a boundless Subject of sacred Worship, and such as call for the highest and most becoming Returns to be made unto them. Now this lies in rendering and giving God the Glory, Honour and Praise, that belongs to him, as he is possess'd of them; in ascribing Thanksgivings, Blessings, Obedience and Service to him. These have and will be never-ceasing Arguments and Matter for Celebration to both Worlds, Heaven and Earth; and most of the Worship recorded in Scripture is founded hereupon, and runs in this Strain. Accordingly we find the Godly sometimes magnifying one Attribute or Perfection, and sometimes another, even as the Strings of an Instrument are severally touch'd upon according to Occasion.

But above all, with what Magnificence and Glory are the divine Perfections celebrated in Heaven! Of which more afterwards.

THE like may be observed concerning the glorious Relations of God: His boundless Sovereignty, his absolute Dominion, and righteous Government over the World; as those also of Creator, Lawgiver, Conserver and Benefactor.

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These, as the former, are equal Subjects of Praise and Acknowledgement, and merit a mighty Tribute of that Sort from us. Hence is that of the Psalmist, *Psa. cxlv. 13. Thy Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and thy Dominion endures throughout all Generations.*

WE might subjoin hereunto his glorious Works, those of Creation, Providence and Redemption, with other rich Acts of Grace, that respect Man's Recovery, Salvation, and Bringing him to Heaven; all which do most eminently lead to and beget Admiration, Transports and Praises. Thus we find the Church employ'd, *Rev. v. 9. Thou art worthy to take the Book, and open the Seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy Blood.* So Chap. iv. 12. *I heard the Voice of many Angels round about the Throne, saying with a loud Voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive Power, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Blessing.*

THIS Branch of Worship we are speaking of, may justly be accounted one of the most eminent, and exceeding all others; for it is the most direct Glorifying of God, and that which the celestial Worship does chiefly consist of. Such Acts of Worship as these we may be sure there are in Heaven, and that there may be more is very likely; but what they are we cannot so much as at present guess at. But of this more afterwards.

THE next Thing is the Consideration of Divine Worship in an imperfect and perfect State.

THIS present World falls under the cloudy Character of an imperfect One; that above under the glorious Character of a perfect One.

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The Great God could have made all his Creation a Heaven, or like to Heaven; but it has seem'd meet unto him to make the several Regions of the World in great Variety; to make one State superior to, and more glorious and excellent than another; and constitute this present One in an Inferiority to that above. Now according to the different and various States of these Worlds, such is the Worship that is perform'd in them. As to this in which we have our present Residence, seeing it is an imperfect One, and consequently we imperfect Creatures, we can but perform an imperfect Worship in it; yea, we are under an Impossibility of higher Performances whilst we are here below; our Beings, Graces and Accomplishments being imperfect, and so many Clogs and Fetterers of Sin, so many Incumbrances and Weaknesses hanging upon and invironing us. But for the more particular Management of the Subject in Hand we may consider,

First, WHEREIN lies the Imperfection of Worship in this present State and World.

Secondly, WHEREIN the Perfection of Worship in Heaven does consist.

To the *First, Wherein* lies the Imperfection of Worship in this present State and World.

1. IN that all the Measures and Attainments of Man here are imperfect. If we take an Estimate of Man, whether inwardly or outwardly, in the State of his Soul or intellectual Operations; and in his external Performance we shall find nothing but Stamps of Weakness and Infirmities upon him, and that he's but as an Embryo, or Fruit that's green or in the Blossom. How great is our Darkness and Ignorance! How imperfect our Conceptions and Apprehensions

sions of God, his Being and Attributes, his Grace and Works! All is tainted with Infirmiti-
ties, is Child-like, and far short of Manhood;
Ripeness and Maturity. Weakness, Narrowness
and Mistakes, are the Properties of his Thoughts,
and his Actions and Performances favour of the
same; but most of all and chiefly is he defective
in Matters spiritual and heavenly, which lye
more remote and distant from him than Matters
of a lower Nature do.

DIVINE Worship does much partake of, and resemble the State and Apprehensions of Persons; (even as Waters do of the Fountains whence they spring.) The greater Correspondence these bear to the Object and Matter of such sacred Work, so much the more answerable will the Worship we perform be. Were we more sanctified, our Hearts better, and our Conceptions larger and more extensive; could we apprehend more agreeably of the Great God, take in more of him into our Minds, and act more suitably to him, it would add proportionably to the bettering our Performances. The more we are posses'd with a Sense of the Excellencies and Holiness of God, so much the more does it advance and perfect our Duties. And so 'tis contrarywise: The more disagreeable the Frame and Workings of Persons Hearts are to this Work, so much the more blemished will their Worship be. A little Vessel can receive but a little: Birds of weak Wings cannot fly high. The Saints have always found, that the more elevated, rais'd and spiritual they have been, so much the more have their religious Duties answer'd the great Ends of them.

SUCH as this then being the Case of Man in this State, consequently the Lines of Wor-
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ship that he draws must needs be crooked and irregular.

2. THE Imperfection of Worship lies in a Defection from the Rule of Worship appointed and given for that End. The Rule of Worship is the Measure and Standard of what is right and wrong. While the Rule of Worship is closely adhered to, and the Duties of it are squared exactly thereby, the Worship consequently is perfect; but swerving or declining from it, and falling short of it, denominates the Worship faulty and imperfect. Now we fail herein several Ways; when the Worship is faulty in the Manner of it, is wanting in Spirituality and Purity, is not levell'd at the Glory of God, is not qualified with right and acceptable Ends of Worship, when we do not pray for Things agreeable to the Will of God in right Manner and Order, and when Degrees of Zeal and Fervour are wanting, with other Things of like Nature.

THE prime Rule of Worship is the holy Nature of God; *John iv. 24. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and Truth.* The secondary Rule of Worship is the Commands, Precepts, Directions and Promises in the Scriptures, given us to that End and Purpose. Both Worlds have Laws and Rules of Worship which are in part common, and in part peculiar and different from one another, and it must needs be thus, because they are so different in their State and Constitution; but the Rules of both agree in this, that they are perfect and compleat in their Kind.

IN all the Acts and Parts of Worship, we should keep our Eyes upon the Rule appointed to that End, and our Hearts close to it. Alas! that

that we so seldom keep touch with it, and are so apt to, and do so frequently swerve from the Method we have chalk'd out for us to walk and act by herein.

3. It lies in the Imperfection of holy Dispositions, Graces and Qualifications for Worship, or those Graces and Qualifications that are the Ingredients, or of the Essence of it. These being the special Instruments of Worship, we must from thence take an Estimate, and make a Judge of it accordingly: If these were perfect, the Worship would be so; but being otherways, consequently the Worship must be answerable thereunto, because they run parallel with each other. No Instrument can give a Sound or make a Melody above its Capacity, and the same we may say of Hearts. Now if we consider the best and most vigorous State of a Person's Graces and Dispositions, they are much short of Perfection, or have many Mixtures of Imperfection in them. And besides, these at the best are not settled, but liable to Declinations, Decays and Abatements; like *Moses's* Hands, who tho' he could hold them up in Prayer for a Time, yet afterwards they flag'd and tir'd, and stood in need of *Aaron* and *Hur* to support them, *Exod. xvii. 11, 12.* Even so do the Graces of Christians sink, and flag, and abate of their Vigour. There's much of Inconstancy and Uncertainty in Grace, as to the State and Exercise of it. This sacred Fire of the Altar, tho' it be very precious, is liable to an Extinction. The Graces of Believers do not keep and hold one and the same Tenor; do not only fluctuate, but dye, as to the Operations of them. And so, like the *Galatians*, in another Case, tho' we begin in the Spirit, yet

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we end in the Flesh, *Chap. iii. 3.* Alike hereunto is it with our religious Performances ; when they are begun with Life and Zeal, their Vigour abates, and they often end in Deadness. Besides, how frequently do we engage in sacred Things, when there is no Incense upon the Altar of our Hearts, nor any sacred Fire to kindle it. It is granted religious Worship is a special Soul-enflaming Means, the Bellows of Grace, a proper Help for blowing up the sacred Flame ; but it does not always produce, and issue in that happy Effect.

Thus it is as to the State and Exercise of the Graces of Worship in general ; and if we should consider them particularly, we shall find that every Grace has its peculiar Infirmitie and Weakness. A great Degree of Deadness clouds and encumbers our Zeal. Our Faith is oft beset with Unbelief ; and our Love to God labours under Pressures and Difficulties. But this leads to the next.

4 It arises from the Sins and Corruptions that intermix themselves with our religious Performances, as also from the Impediments that we are encompass'd with in them. The more special the Opportunity is for our spiritual Advantage, the greater Opposition we may in ordinary expect to meet withal in that Season : And hence it comes to pass that a Time of Worship is an Hour for the working of Corruption and Temptation ; so that the Apostle's Observation is verified and made good concerning others, as well as himself, that when he was about to do Good, Evil was present with him, *Rom. vii. 21.* yea, and not only so, but also most powerful upon us. Thus when we should ascend, the greatest Weights are hang'd upon us to draw us

us downwards; and when we are engaging about the best Work, we meet with the most powerful Obstructions thereunto. A Season of Duty is a special Time of Interruption from Satan, and then is he mostly for casting Obstructions and Impediments in our Way: Then it is that he seeks to distract us by his Suggestions and Excitations of Sin, by his subtle Arts drawing forth our Corruptions, and by these Methods endeavouring to blemish our religious Undertakings. When we should get the nearest to God, and are likely to enjoy most of him, then is our grand Adversary endeavouring to interrupt and interpose betwixt him and us: So that by this Means Water is cast upon the sacred Flame of Devotion, that when it should break forth to the greatest Degree, it's oft extinguis'd or threatned, and in Danger to be so. And hereby it comes to pass that we mix Sulphur with our purest Incense; and the sweet Savour of our Worship and Sacrifices are stain'd and lost in the noisom Fumes of our Corruptions, Distractions, and sinful Diversions. After this Manner is the Worship that's perform'd in this State spotted, clouded and clogg'd with innumerable Infirmities, with many, very many Imperfections, and cover'd with a Multitude of Weaknesses and defacing Qualities.

IN short, and to sum up the whole; Such as we are in this present State, such must our religious Performances needs be; Compounds of Sin, Weakness, Imperfection, and what not of that sort: So that Lamentation and Mourning is a fit Close and Conclusion for all our Duties. What Meditations can be more humbling to us, than these ought to be? And make us more desirous of, and long after a State and

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and World, in which God will be serv'd in full and compleat Perfection.
10 Secondly, WHEREIN the Perfection of Worship in Heaven does consist.

HEAVEN is the Place and Center of Perfection, of Perfection in the highest Sense, of universal, pure and unmix'd Perfection. All the Beings of that World are perfect, and consequently so are all their Services and Performances. They are perfect with a Perfection of Parts and Degrees; every Part and the Whole of what they do is perfect: In such an Opposition do these two Worlds stand to one another: So much is that elevated above this, and this present one depress'd so much below it.

11. THE Worship of Heaven corresponds with the Model and Rules belonging thereunto, carries an exact Conformity to the divine Will and Pleasure. In the glorious Vision of the ever-blessed God they read and understand the Rules and Laws of divine Worship. The happy Vision of him (together with what they have written upon their own Hearts) supplies the Place and Stead of all Means of that Kind: These we may call their Bible, the Scriptures of Heaven. They are acquainted with the Nature of God, his Holiness and Excellencies, and therefore can tell what a Worship is agreeable to him; yea, in him they see all Things necessary for the heavenly State. And as their Wills, so all they do bears a perfect Conformity to the Laws and Rules they have prescribed them, without any Aberrations and Deviations: They are exactly observant of all the Rules that obtain in that blessed State; and except the Case of the fal'n Angels, there hath not been the least Defection from them since the Creation: They are

are punctually regardful of the Matter, the Manner, and all the Particulars and Branches of Worship. They need not, as we do, any Pardon or Allowances for Defects: They never draw any crooked Lines, nor fall below those Heights and Degrees that are prescribed and appointed them. Whence it follows, that all their Performances being of this Kind, entirely conformable to the divine Pleasure, have his Approbation; and nothing's done by them, but what meets with highest Acceptance: So that such a Worship as this must needs be perfect. What blessed and happy Worshippers are these! How great a Privilege, to belong to Assemblies constituted and made up of such Proficients!

2. THE Perfection of the celestial Worship consists in the Dignity and Excellency of its Nature; it has all the Ingredients that are necessary to constitute and denominate it perfect; is compounded and made up of glorious and perfected Acts: There is nothing wanting that there should or ought to be in it, that can contribute to its Excellency; and we cannot say this of any Worship that was ever perform'd here below, except that which our Blessed Saviour offer'd when he was on Earth, and what Angels themselves have presented when they have come to execute the heavenly Messages and Orders amongst us: Of which we have an Instance in *Luke ii. 13, 14. And suddenly there was with the Angel a Multitude of the heavenly Host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the Highest.* We may be assur'd that their Worship is made up of all glorious Requisites and Ingredients wanting nothing, and is replenish'd with every thing, to give it Beauty, Glory and Acceptation. There was a very rich Ointment

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appointed under the Law, compounded of choicest Spices and Ingredients, for the Anointing the Tabernacle, Aaron and his Sons, Exod. xxx. 23, &c. This seems to carry some Resemblance and Similitude to the Worship of Heaven, that's made up and consists of all delightful and fragrant Acts. Oh how like a sweet Perfume and Incense may we conceive it to be! Like a Vial full of sweet Odours. Our Services are oft empty, and wanting these Excellencies they should be constituted of; but their's, the Angels, are never so, but are replenish'd with all that is enriching to them.

It is one Notion of Perfection to want nothing. When a Thing has a Completion of all Things that belong to it, we account it perfect: As a Picture that has all its Lines, and is fill'd up in all its Parts, is reckon'd a perfect One. Thus will it be with the celestial Services; they will be replenish'd with Love, Joy, Ecstasies, Ravishment, Complacency and Satisfaction; yea with all these in their highest Measures and Degrees; be in every respect according to the Tenour of that World, and without the least Deficiencies.

In Heaven there are no blemished or faulty Sacrifices, no unmeet Worship there, no dead Hearts among them, nor any thing to quench the Flames of Devotion in others, as is usual and common with us here below. Here all our Duties are defiled with sinful Imperfections; but in Heaven glorified Spirits perform their Services in full Perfection; 1 Cor. xiii. 10. *But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.* Happy thing to be Partners with such Worshippers in such Work! To believe and think of this Worship is very affecting

affecting, but to see it, and join in it is much more so.

3. It is founded upon the Qualifications and Furniture of the heavenly Inhabitants for this blessed Work. The Great Creator of all Things bestows his Accomplishments upon his Creatures according to the Dignity of their Nature, the Stations he designs them for, and the Work he intends to employ and exercise them in: And hence it is that they have their different Accomplishments and Abilities. And if so, we may suppose the blessed Spirits of that World are very much fitted for the Services of it; are furnish'd with all Necessaries and Requisites, all worshipping Graces, yea are enrich'd even to Abundance for that blessed Work, having their Hearts always in a prepared State, and all Operations ready for it; but we shall have occasion to enlarge more upon this Subject presently.

Now that these are great and special Ingredients to such sacred Work, is what the Blessed find by their own Experience to be so, and what we ourselves know to be true likewise. When a Person is in such a State and Posture, Spiritual Matters go on very readily; but when he labours under the Want thereof, nothing is done in a right Manner: The Bird that has the strongest Wings makes the highest Flights, when those that want them flutter and cannot rise.

O H how valuable are holy Qualifications for such Work! Happy those blessed Spirits that have a Sufficiency thereof, plentiful Effusions and Supplies both of Grace within and divine Aids from without, to carry them on in the glorious Employments of that World: May we have our lesser Shares herein, be strengthned with Strength in our Souls, *Psa. cxxxviii. 3.* that we may per-

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form the holy Offices of this Life in that Manner, as may be a Leading to a more blessed One above.

4. THE Perfection and Glory of the heavenly Worship will lie much in the Numbers of blessed Spirits employ'd and exercis'd therein. The innumerable Societies and Multitudes of these will be a great Consideration as to the Subject in hand: *Where two or three are gathered together to worship God, Matth. xviii. 20.* it's an Advantage; but where there are large Assemblies, it's proportionably more so. Fellow-Worshippers are great Helps to one another in Spiritual Services: How much more then will it be so in Heaven, where there are infinite Numbers joyn'd in that blessed Work? And we find the Glory of the celestial Worship sometimes magnified from this Consideration. Thus we read of the *Charicks of God* being *twenty thousand, Psa. Ixviii. 17.* and that *thousand thousands minister to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him, i. e. infinite Numbers, Dan. vii. 10.* But besides the Numbers, the excellent Qualities of the Worshippers will greatly tend to the bettering and perfecting their Worship: By this Means they'll be Patterns and Incentives; help to animate and inflame one another; give Life and Warmth to a Spirit of Devotion. If the Communion of the Godly on Earth have such a quickening Virtue in it; much more, surely, will it be so as to the Communion of the Blessed above, where an unexpressible and unknown Vigour will be communicated and imparted mutually amongst them, and run through those happy Assemblies, till the Flame be rais'd and grown to the highest Pitch and State of Worship: Considering, moreover, how near

near the Union of the Blessed in Heaven is, that they are animated and inspir'd, as it were with one common Soul, or Spirit, whereby the Communication and Intercourse becomes more entire and compleat amongst them.

How commonly do we find here below that the Frames and Workings of Persons Hearts answer, and are like those they joyn with in sacred Performances. If Fellow-Worshippers be lukewarm and dead, we experience the like Malady to invade ourselves; but if otherways, we meet with contrary Effects, that we are quickened, elevated, and made better by them.

5. THE celestial Worship answers and attains the Ends it is appointed and establish'd for. That which is appointed for such a World, and such great Ends, must needs be excellent. All Worship is constituted for excellent Ends, and this is so in particular; but none answers or comes up fully to them as this does: Their Bows are always bent, and their Arrows always hit the Mark, and never fall short of it. Our religious Performances in this State seldom reach the Ends of Worship; but theirs above do so. This we account a certain Character of right Worship; and the more it attains this Point, the more perfect and compleat we must judge it to be; and the celestial Services do so most eminently.

AND here we might consider the special Reasons and Ends for which they were instituted and ordain'd, *viz.* For the Honour and Glorifying God, the ever-blessed Father, Son and Spirit, rendering and giving to them the Glory of their Perfections, Works and Grace, in all the Branches, Displays and Manifestations of them; and the heavenly Worship is a most pro-

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per Means hereunto ; every Part of it, as well as the Whole, contributes to it : Their Prostrations, Thanksgivings, and Acknowledgments of the divine Excellencies; of the amazing Grace of God to them, in their Salvation, their Doxologies, and Ascriptions of all to him ; their owning him to be the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Original and End of all Things ; and that as all comes from God, so all should be return'd back to him. All this, I say, will work and conduce to the same great End, the glorifying, magnifying and exalting of him. The more they debase themselves before him, so much the more resplendently will the divine Glories break forth and appear more illustrious. All which is agreeable to that of the Apostle, *Rom. xi. 36. For of him, and to him, and through him, are all Things : To whom be Glory for ever.* As if he had said, All is of him, by him, and to him ; he is all in all Things ; and as he made, and works all Things for his own Glory, so his Glory shall shine forth in all ; and the Honour of all shall be reflected and return'd back to him by the Acknowledgments and Services of blessed Spirits : And hereby shall God be all in all, be exalted above all, and be alone all for ever and ever. In a Word, to be thus employ'd, promote and carry on this great Work and blessed End, is and will be their great Business and high Employment for ever.

To this we might subjoyn, that their Worship will be a Testimony of their Allegiance and Duty to God ; an heavenly Tribute, which they will be always rendering to the Lord : The Exercise of their Graces, and much of the heavenly Life, will consist herein. There is no Employment besides this for them ; nothing to exercise

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exercise them in, but such blessed Work as this is.

THUS do the Ministries and Services of the celestial Temple serve and conduct to the glorious Ends for which they were appointed, and never fall short thereof. Well might our Blessed Lord teach us to pray, that the *Will of God might be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven,* Matth. vi. 10, that he might be glorified below in this World, as he is in that blessed One above.

6. A great Part of the Glory of Heaven will consist in the Services and Employments of blessed Spirits. This will be one Branch, and a Part of the Glory of that World: Yea, it is so amiable an Exercise, that it gives a Glory to any Place where it is set up. As the Worship in Solomon's Temple was an Honour to it, a greater Glory than all its outward Splendor; even so will that of Heaven be an Addition to its Glory, especially considering it will be of so elevated and rais'd a Nature. The surprizing and glorious Order that there will be in Heaven, the Musick, Melody, and joyful Sounds that will attend it, with all the admirable Offices that result from, and are Concomitants of its Worship, prove this. Should we suppose this Work abstracted, withdrawn from, or to cease there, it would greatly lessen its Glory, and abate the Magnificence of the Place. Such a transcendent Beauty and Amiableness accompanies the Worship of God; yea, it is both the Glory of Places, and the Glory of Persons.

O H that we could be more concern'd! that the Worship we perform may be of an agreeable Nature, an Honour to ourselves, and such as may give a Beauty and Amiableness to

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the Place in which it is perform'd, that we might cry out with the Psalmist lxxxiv. 1. *H. w amiable are thy Tabernacles O Lord of Hosts!*

7. THE Work and Worship of Heaven is correspondent and answerable to the Place and the State of its Inhabitants. Heaven is a World and State of Perfection; not compounded of Perfection and Imperfection, but of Perfection without Mixtures of the contrary, the Beings are perfected, their assemblies are perfected, they are perfected in their Acts and Operations: But of this we spoke before. In this World there is frequently an Incoherence and Disagreeableness in Persons, Things and Places; but it is otherways in Heaven. There all Things bear a Correspondence and Agreeableness, a Likeness to one another. All Beings act according to what they are. Those that are imperfect act unevenly; but perfected ones keep one and the same Tenour in their Actings and Performances never act unbecoming to, or below themselves. So that there will be no Unevennesses in the heavenly Services, no Discords in their Musick, not a Mixture of Elevations and Depressions, of Deadness and Warmth, as it is with us here below, but all will be of a Peice entirely perfect; their Altars will always be furnish'd with plentiful Measures of holy Fire and sweet Incense; their Affections will always keep their Warmth and Vigour.

To conclude there are these and many other Things might be spoken of the Worship and Employment of blessed Spirits in Glory. What a Subject would this be, if a Heart and Pen could describe it fully, display it in all its Glories. We may wish we could make it as lively to our Conceptions as if we had a View of it. What a World and State is that to be sought and long'd

long'd for, where there is such happy Work, and God is serv'd in such a Manner! In short as much as it is above this present World, in like Degree does its Performances exceed the best that we are here capable of. But how short are all Accounts and Draughts of Heaven and its Employments towards what the Things themselves are!

Thirdly, THE next Subject for our Consideration, is to enquire into the advantages of blessed Spirits for heavenly Work; to consider their Preparations and Qualifications for it.

THE great and bountiful Creator of the World has not been scanty or wanting to any, even the lowest of his Creatures, having furnish'd 'em all with excellent Capacities. But above all he has been most liberal to the chieftest of them; besides that he has qualified them suitably to the Stations and Offices he has appointed and put them into: As a King does by his Courtiers that attend his Presence, so has God done by blessed Spirits that he has chosen to dwell with him in Glory. These we may suppose he has wonderfully fitted for all those Offices he intends to employ them in. Now their Advantages for heavenly Work may be supposed to lye in such Things as these following.

1. IN the excellent Accomplishments they are endow'd withall. The noblest and highest Faculties are most fit for, and meet to be exercised in, the noblest and highest Work. The Angels were furnish'd with great and rich Excellencies in their Creation, and are under the Improvements and Encreases of them, and the Spirits of Men are Beings of great Capacities, especially, when unembodied and glorified. Now their Endowments are either natural, or supernatural and additional ones, what

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they have bestowed on them in their Creation, and what they have confer'd upon them when glorified. Our blessed Saviour has told us that both Angels and the Spirits of the Just will be very richly furnish'd and greatly advanc'd by the many Excellencies that they shall have bestow'd upon them. *Luke xx. 36. Neither can they dye any more, for they are like the Angels,* and in *Matth. xxii. 30. It is said, the Spirits of the just are as the Angels of God in Heaven,* and the Evangelist *Mark xii. 25,* saith the same. Now what can the Sense of these Scriptures be, but that they shall be made equal to them in glorious Qualifications, Privileges and Honours. *i. e.* They shall have the like Gifts and be capable of like Operations with the Angels, have all Graces perfected in them. It is hard to conceive how far a glorious Angel, or glorified Soul can exert themselves in their Operations, what they can comprehend or reach unto. They are finite Spirits, but have some Resemblances and Images of Infinity. They will certainly have great Ideas, and send forth great Acts, and are beings of the most lively and enlarged Apprehensions. Every Faculty will act a wonderful Part in heavenly Offices, especially, considering that they will be under divine Influences, and the most Heart-raising and quickning Advantages. From all which we may collect these Things following. 1. That they have great Abilities for heavenly Services, are excellently qualified for all sacred Offices. 2. That they have a Congruity or Inclination to it, are not only prepar'd and suited for the Work, but their Inclinations to it are strong. This is what they were created for, and what they choose and prefer before all other Work; they have a sacred Byass that Way. 3. To these we may add,

add, their Spirituality and Holiness. Their Spirituality; *They are Seraphims of the Nature of Fire,* and so they are called, *Isa. vi. 2.* and *Ps. civ. 4.* we have much the same, who maketh his Ministers a flaming Fire. Now this gives them a great Agility and Readiness for heavenly Work. And the same we might observe of their Holiness. This is a glorious Character our Lord gives them. *Math. xxv. 31. When the Son of Man shall come in his Glory, and all his holy Angels with him.* As the Want of these is a great Impediment in our Services here below; so the being possess'd of them, is a mighty Help and Advantage to their Services above, the like hereunto is that of *Dan. iv. 13. I saw in the Visions of my Head upon my Bed, and behold, a Watcher, and an holy One came down from Heaven.* And the Saints parallel the Angels, in this divine Quality. 4. Their Love and Delight to and in the ever blessed God and his Service. This Work is a great Part of the Pleasure and Felicity of Heaven. The Joy of blessed Spirits consists in it.

Now If we lay the foregoing Considerations together, we shall find they have great Advantages for this blessed Work; want no Furniture for it, which alas is our Case in this World. Surely, such noble Instruments as these, and so tun'd and prepar'd, must needs make glorious Melody in heavenly Work and Worship.

THE Temper of Angels and Saints is quite beyond that of *David's*, or of the best on Earth in their highest Elevations and Fervours; we may resemble them to the Strings of an Instrument, wound up many Degrees above what it would otherwise be capable of, and proportionably advancing in Sweetness, Melody, and Delicacy of Sound.

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Sound. Could we on Earth get any Thing like to this done upon ourselves it would give a great Addition to our Performances.

2. They have many Advantages for heavenly Work and Services, from that blessed World where they have their Residence and Abode; from the Privileges and Enjoyments of it. As being here below, (a Climate and State so unsuitable for holy Work) puts us under great Disadvantages for it; so contrarywise it is as to Heaven. We may touch upon some of the Helps they have for their high and blessed Work in their exalted Stations, but can conceive but little of them. However we may mention these following.

1.] IN Respect of the Place where they have their abode. There are Differences of Places here below as more or less agreeable to religious Performances in Point of Decency, Beauty, &c. thus *Solomon's Temple* had some Advantages for Worship, which their common Synagogues wanted; but there is a much greater Difference betwixt the best of Places in this World and being in Heaven, the celestial Temple, as to such Work; which yields them Helps unconceivable for it. Heaven is the Temple prepar'd from the Foundation of the World, and fill'd with the Glory and Brightness of the Father and the Lamb, and therefore eminently suited for such Performances, and hath a wonderful Aptitude to beget Vigour in, and enliven them to a high Degree. If a transient View of Heavenly Glory wrought, and had such Effects upon the Spirit of *Stephen*, and animated him to such an Height, as we find it did, *Acts* vii. 56. If the three Apostles were so affected with a Glympse of heavenly Glory in our Lord's Transfiguration

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on the Mount, *Math. xvii.* may we not take it for granted, that the full View and Sight of the heavenly Glory will have proportionable Effects upon blessed Spirits in their celestial Offices? It could not but raise the Heart of the high Priest to go into the *Holy of Holies*, to entertain himself with the Glories of it, and perform the Services appointed him there; how much more may we suppose the Sight and View of the *Holy of Holies*, its Glories and Excellencies, will do upon blessed ones in Heaven? All this will be certified by the Experience of those that are in Motion, and making their Approaches to that happy State.

2.] UPON the Account of the beatifick Vision; the Vision of the ever blessed Trinity, the Father, Son, and Spirit. The Glory and Manifestations of the Godhead will be display'd and seen in Heaven, tho' the Essence of the Divinity be invisible; however, so much will be discover'd as is sufficient and will be the Matter of a complete Happiness. And this will be of wonderful Energy and of unknown Force upon the Minds and Affections of the blessed Spectators and Attendants on the divine Majesty. What Zeal, what sacred Fire, what powerful Emotions will this produce in them, to draw out their Faculties, and give them Life and Inspiration beyond our present Conceptions! If a gracious Soul do but partake of a few Rays and Beams of divine Favour in worship, if God be beheld by Faith, what happy Effects is it attended with? What a Change does it make? How does it warm the Heart, and makes the Services of a quite different Stamp to what they were before? Could we in our religious Performances get believing Views of God and Glory, it would greatly

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greatly animate us. But what is this to what they see, feel and enjoy in Heauen, where there are the Fruits of this glorious Privilege in the highest Degree, and that without Interruption, Intermission, or Cessation? Under such meridian Beams, and thus posited, they are always supplied with holy Oyl, and their Lamps are maintain'd burning and in perpetual Flame, and in no Danger of Extinction, but of growing more and more to a great Height. Oh blessed Help to sacred Worship! May we enjoy something of this on Earth, and have it perfected in Heaven.

3.] **F**ROM those divine Communications, Aids and Assistances, they have vouchsafed them for heavenly Performances. This World and that above needs Influences of Grace. Where Grace is imperfect, and in its Minority, it requires daily Succours to maintain and keep it on Foot; and where it is perfected, it cannot be continued without Supplies from the Fountain. Those sacred Fires that are in the Breasts of blessed Spirits would expire and go out, if they were not fed from the Springs of Grace: Even as Rivulets and Brooks are supplied by Communication with their Head, or as Light is derived from the Sun: As there is Grace in this State to bring Souls to Glory; so there is Grace vouchsafed in Heaven to assist and maintain them in their Work and Services. This Truth is most evident from the Instance of the Angels that fell, and those that persevered: Not but that the former had a Sufficiency of Grace; but the latter had confirming, establishing Grace: These had a greater Measure of it than the other, which made the Difference betwixt them. We must not imagine that the Condition of glorified

rified Spirits is so absolute, and so much in their own Power, as not to need continual Aids and Assurances from God; The Blessed in Glory are not Independent or Self-subsisting; but live by Impartments from the inexhaustible Spring of divine Goodness. For were it not so, they would be rais'd above the State of created Beings, and live without God and divine Influences. Now their enjoying such continued Communications plentifully furnishes them for all heavenly Work, and upholds them in continual Vigour and Strength for it.

4.] IN Heaven they will have the Privilege of Communion and Fellowship with one another, amongst themselves. The Godly are knit and link'd together in this Life very closely; being all Members of the same Body, and animated with the Spirit of Love, Faith and Holiness: But the Communion of the Saints above will be more near, even so far as cannot be conceiv'd or imagin'd at present, but such as will become that excellent and perfect State. There will be amongst them a most wonderful Union and Conspiracy of Hearts and Affections. Now this will be greatly animating and helpful to them in their heavenly Work: To behold how others perform their Services, with what Life and Zeal they worship God, to have such excellent, and so many numerous Patterns and exciting Precedents, to observe the Flames of one another's Hearts: This will very much Work upon the Minds of one another, and have Quickning Effects. As Soldiers by their Courage inspire others with Valour and Boldness: Even so it will be with Angels and Saints in Glory. After this Manner should Christians strengthen and inspire each other in their Assemblies on Earth; draw

draw up and forth one another's Hearts, kindle sacred Fires in them, and be Examples of heavenly Life and Zeal to them.

THERE are these and many more Advantages, Privileges and Helps, that will result and arise from the blessed State of the Saints in Glory. There they cannot want Arguments; nay, will be surrounded with all encouraging Means, to the Performance of heavenly Exercises.

1. T H U S do the Blessed above exceed and out-number us, (as in other Things) so in Advantages and Helps for religious Performances.

3. T H E Felicity of blessed Spirits consists in heavenly Exercises. The Work of Angels and Saints is of the highest and noblest Kind, and therefore is greatly and eminently conducive to their Happiness. The Worship of God is so accounted of in this Life, and much more will it hold good, and be so in that to come. This is what they have plentiful Experience of in their heavenly Services; and which we ourselves might feel more of, if we were more spiritual in them: Their Work will be both the Means and Matter of their Happiness.

[1. I T will be the Means of their Happiness. In the present State we find it is the Way of a Soul's Access and Approach to God, it is call'd a *drawing near to him*, Psa. lxxii. 28. *But it is good for me to draw near to God*; and it is the Way to know more of him, to become better acquainted with him, and liker unto him. Every true Worshipper of God carries some Resemblance to *Moses*, who, when he had been in the Mount with him, brought something of God, something of his Glory along with him, in the shining of his Face, *Exod. xxiv. 29*. And it will be thus and more abundantly so, as to the

the Worship of the Saints in Heaven. While they are about their appointed Work, God will emit and send forth the Beams of his Glory and Well-pleas'dness upon them; Even as the Stones in the Breastplate of the high Priest shone with a peculiar Lustre in the Responses that were made to his Enquiries, as the Jews tell us: And it will further contribute to their Happiness in that whilst they are exercised in the Work of Heaven they will be honouring and glorifying of God by their Adorations of his infinite Perfections, and carried forth in Transports thereof. This we may call the delicious Manna, the true Food of Angels and Saints. What Gratefulness, Delight and Pleasure will they meet with herein? Nothing can abounding with greater Sweetness and Satisfaction.

[2. It is the Manner of their Happiness. The Work of Heaven is the Honour and Dignity of the Saints; like a Motion about or upon the true Center. Our Worship on Earth is a seeking a Happiness; that in Heaven is the fruition of Happiness. The former is to make us happy Persons, the latter to continue us in that State. During our Residence in this World, we use the Means to bring us to the End; in Heaven both the Means and End, our Service and Happiness are concentrated and meet in one. The Communion the Saints have with God in Heaven does much consist in it. The Failure and Want of this would be an Alay and Abatement of their Happiness, a Lessening of their Felicity: And in like Manner is it with us on Earth; in the Worship of God we are Working out our own Happiness; during that, our Intercourse with him is maintain'd, but when that ceases, it is much abated.

4. TH^E blessed above are free from all impediments and Hindrances in celestial Exercises. They have nothing to cool or abate their Fervours, nothing to extinguish the Flames of Devotion in them, nothing to pull them down, or obstruct and check them in their Elevations, no cross Gales to interrupt them, no natural Corruptions to disturb them, nothing to intercept betwixt God and them, no Cloud, no Vail can be drawn between them: Thus will they dwell in the Mount of Worship and not make a Descent thence.

WHAT a happy World and desirable State will this be! Where there are no Clogs, or Weights to retard or hinder heavenly Work; with what Readiness and Evenness may they carry it on, with what Celerity and Agility may they move forward and make a Progres in it?

AND what an Advantage will this be to their happy Work, which the present State we are in gives Experience of! The freer we are from Incumbrances, so much the better are our Performances: But when loaded with Sins and Infirmities, we move on slowly, and drive on heavily.

To sum up the whole: In such as these and many other Respects are Angels and Saints adapted, disposed and advantaged for Heavenly Work, and even to that Degree that they have not the least Unaptness and Unfitness for it. The *Psalmist* counted it a rare Attainment, and glорied in it, that his Heart was fix'd for the Praises of the Lord, *Ps. lvii. 7.* How much greater Occasion have they to glory, who are always thus fix'd, and never unstrung and out of Tune. What Heavenly Melody, Sweetnes and Ravishingnes may we suppose their Worship carries in it!

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CHAP. IV.

CHAP. IV.

*Some Propositions relating to the Worship
of blessed Spirits in Heaven; of the Ser-
vice of Heaven in Particular, or a par-
ticular Consideration of the Work of Angels
and Saints in Heaven. That there will
be a distinct, as well as a common Worship,
performed there to the blessed Trinity.*

HAVING in the foregoing Chapter
consider'd several Things about Wor-
ship in general, as also something
relating to that of Heaven. We shall
now approach and advance a little nearer that
glorious World, and lay down some Propositions
about the Work of blessed Spirits there: And
oh that we might be help'd in giving some right
tho' rough and imperfect Draught of this Subject!

I. THE proper and best Conceptions of hea-
venly Work and Services in general, falls under
the Term and Notion of honouring and glori-
fying God. Or, all the Work and Busines of
the blessed in Heaven is reducible to that of ho-
nouring and glorifying him, glorifying God in
the highest and most elevated Kinds and Ways
that Creatures are capable of. This is the great
and common End that all the Creatures were

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made for, but most especially Angels and Men, and which according to the Perfection of their Natures, they do in their different Measures attain and arrive unto. *Rev. iv. 11. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power: For thou hast created all Things, and for thy Pleasure they are, and were created.* This is what we should all aim at here; but is especially attain'd and perform'd in Heaven. We may call the glorifying of God the Genus of their Work, and comprehend all Worship and heavenly Exercises under it, for it is the Matter and End of all. And this may be confirmed to us by the following Observation, viz. that most or all the Accounts that we have of the Worship of Heaven in Scripture, is represented to us under Doxologies and Forms of Praise, in ascribing to God the Honour and Glory that's due unto him. And for this Reason we are told by some that the Work of the Saints in Heaven, is to give Glory to God. *Rev. vii. 11. 15. And all the Angels stood round about the Throne, and about the Elders, and the four Beasts, and fell down before the Throne, saying, Amen: Blessing, and Glory, and Wisdom, and Thanksgiving, and Honour, and Power, and Might, be unto God for ever, and ever.* And this we are assur'd of, that this is the highest Work that any Creature can be exercis'd in, and consequently is a fit Employment for blessed Spirits. For this blessed and happy Work it is that the Godly begin to be form'd and prepar'd in this Life, and which they are learning and growing up in, in Order to the perfecting of it above.

It may justly be accounted a grand Question, whether all the Busines and Work of the Saints in Heaven, may be comprized under the Name of

of Worship. Now this we may suppose may be answer'd in the Affirmative, that it may be so called. True such a Question may seem strange to some, because they conclude there is no other Work there, but that of Praises and Thanksgivings, as we have just now observ'd that the Scripture seems to place it wholly in this: But yet we may humbly suppose besides what we call Worship in a direct and proper Sense, that there are some other Offices in Heaven, that cannot be called so in a direct Sense, tho' indirectly and improperly they may come under that Name. For all that they perform is in Obedience to God, terminates upon him as the grand Object of it, and is referable to his Glory: And a holy Person speaking of Heaven, saith, "Duty will be my constant Work there." We might mention some of these, as the Ministrations and Offices the Angels are employ'd and exercis'd in, in this lower World; and it may be, these will not wholly cease, but in one Way or other be continu'd for ever. So we may assert that there will be heavenly Conferences among the Blessed, in which the Communion of Angels and Saints will in Part consist. Thus we find that *Elias* and *Moses* that were Inhabitants of Heaven, when they appeared at the Transfiguration of our Lord in the Mount, are said to be talking with him, *Mark ix. 4.* And we may conclude there will be the like among the Blessed in Glory. And we must not imagine that the heavenly State will be made up of one, or a few perpetual and unalterable Scenes; but of many, of great Varieties, all which will add to the Glory and Lustre of that World, and the Honour of God. In a Word, there are these, and others such like, that are unknown to us, that they

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will employ their Eternity in, and yet in this God will be all in all ; all will be done to him and for him, and a Series of Worship and Devotion shall run through all, and consequently all will come under the general Name of Worship.

2. THERE is, or may be suppos'd, a Variety in the heavenly Worship ; or thus, there is a Variety of Duty and Worship in Heaven : Not only a Variety of Operations and Acts of the Blessed in their Worship, which we may be asfur'd and need not so much as doubt of ; but several sorts of Worship. *i. e.* other Sorts, something besides Praises and Thanksgivings ; *viz.* all honourary Acts, Performances, Attendances, and Services proper to that World ; whatever is becoming the Majesty of the great God, and suitable to be rendred to him, and whatever is agreeable to the State of the Blessed to offer and present to him. We cannot tell but there may be Addresses, Supplications, and other Parts of Worship, of a like Nature, which tho' we cannot assert, yet may we probably conclude it to be so. The Instance of our blessed Saviour praying to the Father when he was on Earth seems to establish this Conception ; which, had it not been recorded in the History of his Life, we should scarce have believed, and may be some would have been ready to have denied, as what carried Absurdity in it, and yet he was under no Wants. True, all Worship and Supplications that intimate Want, and import the Imperfection of its Worshippers must be excluded ; but none that import a Dependency on God, and the Receipt of fresh and constant Succours from him, and whatever is consistent with Perfection, and the happy State they are in, may be asserted to belong to, and have room in Heaven. They cannot

cannot need or beg for Grace, but they may pray for the Continuance or Confirmation of it, and that their glorious Privileges may be ensur'd to them for ever: That they have Desires in Heaven, and many Things that want Accomplishment, which they are believably waiting for, is manifest; As the Completion of the Number of the Elect, that the Church triumphant may be perfected, and that their Bodies that are at present in the Dust, may be rais'd, glorified and united to their Souls, and that they may have a final Justification and Absolution from the Judge of the World, at the last. These, and such like Matters, are the Objects of their Desires, and what they are waiting and longing for. Now where there are Desires, we may infer, there are Prayers and Supplications. But of the Particular Exercises of the Blessed in Heaven we may speak afterwards.

It is absurd to be peremptory and positive about Things that are above us, and that cannot be comprehended, but on which Side soever of the Question our Judgment lies; yet we agree that we would conceive honourably of Heaven, and not assert any Thing to the contrary concerning it.

3. THE Employment and Worship of Heaven, will turn and stand in Part upon the same, and also different and several Reasons, and Arguments. Or as to the Grounds of the Worship of Heaven, there will be something of a Sameness, and a Difference also. This may be made apparent to every one's Consideration, and the Case of Angels and Saints makes it evident. And we might here enquire wherein their Work and Worship will harmonize and agree, and wherein it will be different, they will be conjunct

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and Harmonious in their Performances to the highest Degree, join in many Things, but will have different, several Strings to touch upon. They can both Praise God for electing, glorifying Grace and Love, and many other Things that we cannot reach or attain to a Conception of; so far as their Condition lies parallel and is alike, so far the Grounds of their Performances are the same: But then where they differ, the Reasons of their Services are several. Glorified Angels are indefectible Beings, were never guilty of any Apostacy from their Creator, and can praise God for confirming Grace, keeping them from falling, when great Numbers of them did so. So that herein their Case will be peculiar from that of the Saints, and they cannot bear a Part with, or accompany them in Thanksgiving upon this Account; and so it may fall out in other Things: And the like to this may be observed on the Part of the Saints. They were once Apostate Creatures and revolted from God, but by redeeming and converting Grace, were sanctified and justified, saved and brought to Glory, and for that Reason can sing the Song of *Moses* and the Lamb, and say, thou hast redeemed us by thy Blood out of all Kindreds, Tongues and Nations, *Rev. v. 9.* They can, I say, sing this Song, which the Angels cannot. So likewise they can praise God for the Mercies of this Life, those of their Pilgrimage, his carrying them through a Throng of Dangers, and their safe Conduct to Heaven, by Means of the wise Guidance of the Captain of their Salvation, *Heb. ii. 10.* With infinite more of this Kind; none of all which falls within the Compass of the Angel's Worship. And the same Difference might be remark'd betwixt them in other Respects.

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To this purpose, saith one, we have greater Cause of blessing God than the Angels have. It is a Question whether an innocent or penitent Person is more bound, or under greater Obligations to God. To which he answers in the following Manner. An innocent One is bound to praise him, in Respect of the Greatness of the Benefit he receives from him, and the Continuance of it; but a penitent Person in Respect of the Freeness and Graciousness of his Favours, and this is much more conspicuous towards Man than the Angels. God was indeed good and bountiful to them, creating them out of nothing, endowing them with many Excellent Gifts, but to Man that was sinful, God was good indeed; he lov'd us while Enemies; when his Justice for our Sins, put a Bar to our Salvation, he spared not his beloved Son, but deliver'd him to a cursed Death in our Room and Stead.

To all this we may subjoyn. That this Difference and Variety in the Case of Angels and Saints, will make no Difference or Breach in the Harmony of the celestial Worship; for there will be a perfect Union and Conjunction in it notwithstanding: And thus it is with us in this Life, our Praises and Thanksgivings are or may be the same, when the Mercies are different, that we are at the Season making Acknowledgment of.

4. THERE will be some Difference in the celestial Worship hereafter, from what it is at present, or we may consider the Worship of Heaven, as it stands at present, and what it will be, when the Elect shall be gather'd and completed, and all Things finish'd, relating to that World. They have already infinite Occasions and Matter of Praise, from the Mercies that they have received, and

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and the glorious Things God has done for them, but at the End of the World, there will be a Consummation and finishing of all; when the top Stone of this glorious Fabrick will be laid on. The Number of the Blessed will then be perfected, the Bodies of the Saints will be raised, be glorified and united to their Souls, and be joint Instruments in heavenly Services and Performances with them. All which will be a great Addition to their happy State, and the Perfection of it, and consequently they will have more abundant Matter of Thanksgiving, and new Songs of Praise will be added to those, they sung before. A Volume of new Mercies to rehearse and sing over. And thus we find it here below. The greater our Mercies are, so much the more are ingenuous Hearts enflam'd with them, and the Worship proportionably more fervent. And the more we have to join with us in it, to such a Degree is the Worship raised and accented. Every Mercy is an Incentive of Devotion, and many of them so much the more so. But the total Sum will carry it to the highest Pitch.

SOME may be ready to conclude that the Employment and Worship of the blessed in Glory, will carry one and the same constant Tenour and State without Alteration, but a close Consideration of Things overthrows such a Conception. True, the Worship of Heaven will never ebb, or decline; but will be upon the Encrease and Augmentation, swell and grow to more, and rise higher and higher, like the Waters of the Sanctuary, *Ezek. iv. 7.* Here our Worship abates and flaggs, but their's above will be in continual Growth and Improvement.

BUT tho' we suppose these, or other Circumstances

stances in the celestial Performances; yet we may be sure, there will be none that will be degrading to it, nothing but what will be heightning, and to the Glory of it, nothing to render it less desirable to us, whilst we are absent from it, or less amiable and ravishing in the Fruition of it.

5. THE higher the Stations and Mansions of the blessed are, the greater their Glories, so much the more in Proportion thereunto will their Performances be excellent and exceed others. The Luminaries of our lower Heavens and the different Magnitudes and Sizes of them, yield us a lively Representation of the State of the Blessed, in the supreme Heavens. As some of the former outshine the others in lustre and Brightness, even so it is in the Case before us, and this is the very Comparison the Apostle uses, to illustrate and prove to us the Difference and Variety of the Glory of the Bodies of the Saints at the Resurrection. *1 Cor. xv. 41, 42. there is one Glory of the Sun, and another Glory of the Moon, and another Glory of the Stars. So also is the Resurrection of the Dead.* Now may we not from the Difference of the Saints in Point of Glory, Stations and Privileges infer, that there will be a Diversity in the Services and Worship they perform to God. That as far as they exceed them in the former, to that Degree, that will outstrip them in the latter. Even as musical Instruments of the greatest Bulk, excel others in Noise and Sound; and by their Variety, make the most excellent Melody; so we may suppose it will be in Heaven; the Variety that there will be in their Services will contribute and conspire to the Excellency and Sweetness of them.

AND yet all and every one will perform their Services

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Services in a Manner suitable to them, and as will be fully acceptable to God, and so as to attain the Ends of Worship.

To sum up the present Point. There are these and many other glorious Varieties or Differences in the celestial Employments and Exercises, which by Reason of Darkness and Narrowness of Apprehension, we cannot attain or reach unto. There are but few Things of this blessed World that we can bring unto the Light, and most lie hid under a Vail of Obscurity and Darkness, till they be unfolded and opened in a full Vision and Fruition of them.

THE second Head for Discourse, is to consider the Work of the Blessed in Heaven in Particular.

1. ONE of their Employments will be the delightful Contemplation of heavenly Objects, God and his glorious Works. Contemplation and Meditation are two of the great Duties of Man in the present, but much more will they be his Business in the future State. This is a Point that needs no Proof, for it carries its own Evidence along with it. Here we should take under Consideration, the suitableness of this Duty hereunto, and the great Advantages they will have for it. As the great Advancement of blessed Spirits in their Attainments will render them fit for it; so the Strength, Purity and Agility of their Minds will dispose them thereunto. And the Multitude of glorious Objects of the chiefest and highest Sort, as also the Copiousness and fullness of them; these will excite and invite them to this Work, and employ them therein. As the everblessed God himself, the Lord Redeemer, God and Man in one Person, the Glo-

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ry of the humane Nature of Christ, and the blessed Spirit, of which more afterwards. There is great and abundant Work for the Mind in Heaven; many Things to call it forth, and draw it into Action. To which we may add, the Glory of Heaven, the Celestial Temple, and its Inhabitants; and that they will have the best Situation and Position for the Work of Contemplation. They'll see the holy City, the heavenly Jerusalem, and all its glorious Mansions. Here there will be far more excellent Views than what Moses had of *Canaan* from Mount *Pisgah*, or the Apostle *John* had when he saw the holy City descending out of Heaven from God, and that had his Glory upon it. *Rev. xxi. 10, 11.* This will be noble, and excellent Work for excellent Minds; an Exercise every way becoming them, and worthy of glorified Spirits. This is God-like Work, and such as he himself is exercis'd in, *viz.* in the Contemplation of his own Being. Meditation helps much to warm a Christian's Heart on Earth, to enkindle and excite Grace, when Objects are at a Distance, and seen by Faith only: How much more enflaming then may we suppose a celestial Contemplation will be, where there's the fullest and nearest View and Vision of them? And they are seen and beheld in all their Glories and Excellencies. If the Apostle's Contemplation of Paradice, or the Third Heaven, transported him to that degree, *2 Cor. xii.* how much more will that of the Saints do the like upon them?

THE Contemplation of these Glories will make them breathe out in Meditations of this kind. What amazing Glory is this that I am surrounded with? With what astonishing Sights am I entertain'd? How little did I know of that God,

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God, whose Majesty and Glory I now behold? How small of that Redeemer, whom I see shining brighter than the Sun at Noon-day? How little of that blessed Spirit, and of Heaven, which I now have unfolded and open'd to me in all his glorious Excellencies?

This is one thing that should endear and make the heavenly State and Work precious to us: And let us see how worthy it is of our Desires and Pursuits in this present Life; and also that the contemplative Mind carries something in it of a Similitude to Heaven.

2. A NOTHER Exercise of the Blessed above will consist in a due Entertainment of divine Communications and Manifestations, and making agreeable Returns thereunto. Entercourse and Communion betwixt the Great God and the Saints will comprise much of heavenly Work, or be the Sum of it. Nothing in Nature is more prepared to receive the Beams of the Sun, than glorified Spirits are to receive the celestial Ones, emitted and sent forth upon them, from the universal Fountain of Light and Goodness. We have reason to wonder at the Emissions of the Beams of the Sun in Light and Heat; but how much more at those that God will send forth upon his Saints, that will be more abundant, infinite and everlasting. Oh how clear and free a Medium there will be betwixt him and them! There will be nothing there to obstruct, or cause an Interruption or Diversion: There is the most lively and intimate Entercourse betwixt God and his Creatures in that State, even what is beyond Thought and Apprehension. Oh how open will they lye to, and how receptive will they be of all divine Impartments! We give too little Entertainment

to the Influences and Communications of the holy Spirit in this World, repel instead of giving them Admission ; but it's quite otherways in Heaven.

AND the Returns the Blessed make unto them will be proportionable thereunto, *viz.* in the Exercise of all Affections and gracious Workings reciprocally or back again towards God. In Heaven there is not only Contemplation, but Action and Re-action, and that of the noblest and highest Kind. Now amongst the Returns and Answers that they make to divine Communications, we may reckon all those Operations and Graces that belong to that State, and shall continue in Exercise for ever. As there are some Graces of greater Use than others in this Life ; *1 Cor. xiii. 13. And now abideth Faith, Hope and Charity ; but the greatest of these is Charity, i. e. Love.* Even so will it be in Heaven : There will be a Faith and Hope in that State, tho' differing from those we have and exercise here below. Now these two Graces are imperfect ; but then they'll be perfect, and will be exercis'd in a Suitableness to that World : For can it enter inter our Thoughts that God and Christ and the heavenly Blessedness will not be the Objects and Matter of our Faith and Hope in a perfected State ? Yes, questionless : But there will be some Change in them from what they now are, because the Objects of them here are absent and distant, which they will not be hereafter. And thus that of this Apostle is true, *When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away, 1 Cor. xiii. 10.* But the Meaning of that Clause, that *the greatest of these is Charity*, is, that Love will be the chief, or one of the chief, the predominant, or triumphant

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phant Grace of the heavenly State. It is so called, because of its eminent Use in Heaven, where the principal Employment of the Saints will be the Exercise of Love. And this is according to the Apprehensions of some Divines, that make it lead the Way in the Train of celestial Graces, and call it the divine Nature, the everlasting Work, and the Soul's Felicity there; and make it consist in a Complacency in God, and in his Saints and Works. And hence it is call'd by some the Grace of Heaven, as Praise is said to be the Duty of that Place. The Exercise of Love will be so much their Work, that the Life of blessed Spirits, or the Life that they live in Heaven may truly and properly be call'd a Life of Love. There and then it is that this Grace will extend itself beyond all the Bounds and Imperfections to which it is confin'd at present, and swell into a River; for in Heaven it is that they have the highest Capacities and Arguments for this Grace, and exercise it accordingly. Here we know not how to love, cannot do it as we should do; but above they will be effectually acquainted with it, and be Proficients therein, yea, it will be most highly congruous and agreeable to them. There this will be abundant Matter to feed the Flame of Love, and Bellows and Incentives to blow it up to the greatest Heighths.

HEREUNTO we may subjoyn the other Graces that are exercis'd in Heaven: All which will be rais'd to the like State and Heighth with that of holy Love. All the Acts of the Blessed are of an extatrick, superlative Nature. There will be an high Tide of all excellent Affections. The Graces of Joy and Delight will break forth and gush out as from pregnant, never-ceasing Springs.

Springs and Fountains. Heaven is the Seat and Center of holy Complacency and Gladness. Compleat Satisfaction flows from the Vision and Fruition of God. *In his Presence is Fulness of Joy, and at his Right Hand there are Pleasures for evermore,* Psalm xvi. 11. The Causes and Excellencies of the heavenly Life are express'd in these Words. The Causes are the influxive Presence of God, the Revelation of his attractive Perfections, the beholding his Face, and the Declaration of his peculiar Favours. Our Affections that are now scatter'd on many Things, shall joyn in one full Current in Heaven, where God is and will be all in all. His glorious Presence and Manifestations will be the Nourishers of these Graces, and supply them with Matter and Oyl for everlasting Exercises. We cannot ascend in our Thoughts so high as to conceive the Excess of Joy that attends the Operations of glorified Souls upon their proper Objects. So that indeed we may call the Life above, a Life that's swallow'd up in Joys and Delights that are unexpressible.

To those foregoing we may add others that will be acted over; as those of profound Reverence and deep Humility; of which we need not doubt but there are many Expressions and Evidences there. We read of falling down before the Throne, and before the Lamb, *Rev. v. 8, 14.* which carries in it a Sense and Importance to that purpose. They see the Ground and Reason for the Exercise of these Graces in another kind than we can here apprehend. The Holiness and Majesty of God makes another sort of Impression upon them, than we are able to take in here below. And if some Graces expire and terminate in this Life, we do

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not know but some new ones, that we are ignorant of, may commence and take the Place of them.

WHAT we have been speaking of, is another Branch of the heavenly Life and Work; by which we see it will lye much in holy Passions and Actions; in mutual, reciprocal Communications, or in sacred Reactions betwixt the ever-blessed God and sanctified Spirits: The want of which on our part, in the present Life, is our great Unhappiness. How oft does the holy Spirit attempt to draw our Souls forth to devout Operations, and set them a going, when we do not move or make any willing Answers thereunto?

1. WHAT we have said under this Head is what in other Terms we call the Communion that the Saints have with the ever-blessed God in Heaven, which is that sweet Elixir, or as the Blood and Spirits that runs thro' and is intermix'd with all they do, and is that in which much of the Felicity of that World does consist.

3. BEING exercis'd and employ'd in all heavenly Offices, Duties and Services. What these are, and how many, is beyond our Conception; but that there will be Employments of the highest Kind cannot be gainsay'd, and they'll never cease from the Performances that are appointed them. There are Changes in their Work; but no Cessations, Interruptions, or Intermissions. There will be much Duty perform'd to the blessed Trinity in various Acknowledgments, Adorations and Thanksgivings, all which comes under the Name of heavenly Worship; of which we shall afterwards speak particularly, therefore wave it at present. But besides this, there will be several Offices that Angels and

and Saints will owe and discharge to one another. There will be mutual Endearments amongst them, a sweet Intercourse between 'em; Angels expressing Testimonies of Love to the Saints, and the Saints making suitable and like Returns back again to them; and the like we may conclude there will be amongst the Saints themselves: Many Narratives, Histories, and Accounts of their Mercies, of the Methods of their Salvation, and how they were brought to Heaven. These we may suppose will be there; all which will be accompanied with (and from which there must needs result) many Offices of Love and Congratulations betwixt 'em.

HEAVEN is the most active State and World of all other whatsoever; and their Work there will be more and greater than what we have here below: Tho' it's granted we have enough to exercise us in a constant Circulation of Duty, yea and more than we can perform. Spirits have Activity in their Natures, and are wrought and train'd up for it by the excellent Gifts and Accomplishments they have conferr'd upon 'em. Grace very much takes off Dullness and Inactivity; and as it encreases, so much the more does it work up a Soul to great Measures of Activity. The Angels do not perform their Messages to this World more swiftly than they move in the heavenly Worship and Services; and can we think that God has not appointed 'em to work that's answerable thereto? God has many slow and tardy Servants in this World, but none such in that above.

BUT what the heavenly Works and Employments are, saith one, we shall perfectly know when we come thither. In general we know, 1. That they will be Works of Love to God

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and to his Creatures, *i. e.* such as Love inclines us to exercise. 2. They will be Works of Obedience to God, *i. e.* such as we shall perform to please his Will, and because he willeth them to be our Duty. 3. They will be useful Works to others. 4. They will be pleasant to ourselves, and Part of our Felicity. 5. And they will carry all to God our End, and be to his Glory, and lead to our centring and resting in him as our only Happiness. What other Service God will have for us, saith the same Author, in another Place, we cannot tell; but Love and Praise we are sure will be the chief, and the rest will be good, and holy, and honourable, whatever it be.

WE must not think that it abates the Glory and Perfection of the heavenly State to suppose the Work of it to be so great. True, it's a Place and World of Rest, but not of Cessation from Work that's consistent with Rest. The Employment of the Blessed in Heaven is not in order to their Attainment of their End, as a Means proper thereunto, as ours here below is, for that they have already accomplish'd; but like a Motion upon the Center of Felicity, and what is the Matter of their Happiness, as a Part of it, and what will contribute to the Continuance of it: Nay, it's so much a Branch of their Happiness in Heaven, that they could not be happy without it. But of this we have spoken already.

WE must not judge and form Notions of the Duty and Work of Heaven by what ours here below is. Theirs has no Tedium, Lazitude, or Dullness attending it; and is always accepted and answer'd with the highest Tokens of Love, and those Manifestations that are agree-

agreeable to that State where it is perform'd.

To conclude. May we form such like Conceptions of the heavenly State as these we have here given, to make us more in love with it, and engage us in that Work that will be ours for ever, if we can attain to the Enjoyment of it.

THE Third General. That there will be a distinct, as well as a Worship in common, perform'd to the Blessed Trinity in Heaven.

THAT the Blessed Trinity do emit, send forth, and shine with a distinct Glory in Heaven, as well as the Deity or Godhead, with a Glory common to it, is a Truth that none I think will oppose or contradict. Heaven is a glorious World, and made so with the Glory and glorious Beams of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Of God the Father's Glory we read *Matth. xvi. 27. For the Son of Man shall come in the Glory of his Father.* And we have the Glory of the Lord Redeemer mention'd, *Chap. xxv. 31. When the Son of Man shall come in his Glory.* Very express is that of our Saviour, *John xvii. 5. Glorify thou me with the Glory which I had with thee before the World was.* And we may suppose the same as to the Third Person, the Holy Spirit, *viz.* that he will have a distinct Glory in Heaven as well as the other Sacred Persons, the Father and the Son.

WE need not stand to prove that there will be a Worship perform'd in Heaven to the Blessed Trinity in common; and therefore we'll endeavour to shew, 1. That there will be a distinct Worship render'd and given to them there. 2. We shall enquire wherein this distinct

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Worship consists. Of both which we shall speak in their Order. And first of the former.

1. ALL the three Persons of the Trinity, are equal or alike Objects of Adoration. Thus they are represented to us in the Scriptures, and consequently we may suppose it to be in Heaven, because this is what some make a Matter of Controversy, we might touch upon an Argument or two to clear this Point, *Math. xxviii. 18. Go teach all Nations, baptizing them, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost.* Here we see that the Disciples of Christ are listed into and initiated in the Service of the blessed Trinity, equally and alike dedicated to all the three sacred Persons. So likewise the Benedictions of the Gospel, run in the Name of the three Persons. 2 *Cor. xiii. 14. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Communion of the holy Ghost, be with you all.* Here we may note that all the Persons, are the Fountains and Springs of divine Blessings. q. d. This is my concluding Prayer for you, that you may partake of all those Benefits, which Christ of his free Grace and Favour has purchas'd, that the Father has out of his mere Love purposed, and that the holy Ghost does apply, communicate to, and bestow upon the Elect. And from this we may collect, that there are some Blessings that are to be ask'd distinctly, of each of the sacred Persons of the Trinity, and some Gifts peculiar to each of them, to bestow and communicate. Thus it is here on Earth, and we may conclude, there is the like Oeconomy and Order in Heaven. May we ever have our Minds filled with deep and profound Adorations of them, and give the Glory that is due unto them.

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2. THEY have a distinct Operation and Agency in the Works of Nature, Grace, and Man's Salvation, and several Relations resulting and arising thence, as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. Thus there is one Work or Office belongs to God the Father, and one to God the Son, and a third to the holy Ghost. The first Person in the Trinity forms the Scheme of Redemption, lays the Platform of it, and sends the Son in Execution of it. In Pursuance of which, the Lord Redeemer undertakes, executes and goes through the glorious Work of opening a Way to Heaven, by his Death, and Satisfaction; becomes our Sacrifice, and pays down an infinite Price and Ransom for a lost World. And the Office of the holy Spirit, is to apply, and bring Home the Sufferings and Undertakings of Christ, and make them effectual, and saving to, and upon the Souls of Believers. Now the Work of Redemption, and the Parts that the sacred Trinity have born in it, are known in another and better Manner in Heaven, than they are below. And consequently their Obligations to them, are more powerful and strong upon them: And does it not from hence follow, that they should be accordingly acknowledg'd by blessed Spirits? for then would it not be a Wrong not to give them suitable Adorations upon this Account? In our present State the blessed Trinity falls greatly short of the Honour and Praise that belongs to them for these glorious Works, and therefore we may conclude it will be eminently given them above. The holy Scriptures tell us that it is the Will of the Father that all Men should honour the Son as himself, and for this Reason he hath committed all Judgment to him. *John. v. 22. 23.* Upon which we may infer, that it is

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the Father's Pleasure likewise, that the holy Ghost should partake of the same Honour with the Son. And if he would have this Tribute paid unto them on Earth, we may suppose he would have blessed Spirits render the like to them above. Now without such a distinct Acknowledgment as this we are speaking of, the Glory due to them, could not be given them. As for Example, how could Christ have the Glory of his Incarnation, and other of his Undertakings given him, and Praises for them, without a particular Adoration of him upon that Account? All which makes it evident that a distinct Worship, a peculiar Honour and Glory is given and rendered to them in that World. And we have an Argument in the Text to this Purpose, in the threefold Ascription of Holiness to the Lord. So that as the Scripture teaches us to give Glory and Praise to the Lord Redeemer, in saying, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive Glory, Honour, Blessing and Praise; so we may conclude the celestial Songs run in the same Form and Style with Respect to God the Father and the holy Spirit; and that they sing, worthy is the Father of all Glory, Honour and Blessing for his glorious Works, Gifts and Graces; and worthy is the holy Ghost, to receive Honour, Glory, Blessing and Praise, for his renewing, sanctifying Works and Operations. Of which more presently.

3. A distinct Worship is requir'd and given to them in the present State; and consequently we may conclude it will be so in Heaven. The first Proposition is a Truth that will be acknowledged, by all that are sound and orthodox. We have already noted that there are some Gifts peculiar to each Person of the Trinity, to bestow upon

upon Man, and according hereunto, must they severally be applied to for them, and the Eyes of Suplicants be directed towards them. True, the grand Rule of Gospel Worship, is to worship God the Father, by the Son, through the holy Spirit, yet this is no Contradiction to what we are maintaining. And here we might observe that there seems to be a common Neglect amongst many in their Worship; that they do not particularly and distinctly address themselves to the blessed Trinity, but generally to all the three Persons in common, to God essentially consider'd. When besides what we are to ask of God the Father, there are many Things that we are to request of Christ and the holy Spirit, seek unto them particularly for. We may reasonably conclude that we fall short of many Mercies through the Neglect thereof: It is therefore to be wish'd that this Matter might be redress'd.

Secondly, WHEREIN this distinct Worship of the blessed Trinity consists.

1. THE Worship of the Deity or Godhead in common consists in an Acknowledgment, Veneration, and Adoration, of the divine Majesty and Glory, those Perfections and Attributes that belong to all the three Persons. This Branch of Worship must be established in the first Place; hereby the Unity of the Three Persons is asserted and own'd. This we may call a Conjunct, or general Worship of the Deity. Under this Consideration comes in the Adoration of God's Infinity, Immensity, and Eternity, the Attributes of his Power, Holiness, and Justice, with the rest of them, and the glorious Manifestations, Displays, and Revelations that he makes of himself to blessed Spirits. Every one of these are and will be high and lofty Subjects for them, and are

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are a Foundation for the highest Admiration, Transports, Raptures, and Thanksgivings. These are the great Topicks of Worship in Scripture, for Man in his present State, and meet and proper ones for the blessed in Heaven. Thus we see the glorious Deity as enjoying all Excellencies is a meet Object of Acknowledgment and Worship. But it is not so consider'd, only collectively, but singly; every Perfection is a String to touch severally and apart upon, and makes a glorious Melody in Heaven. Sometimes one Attribute is magnified by them and sometimes another, and sometimes altogether. our shallow Conceptions and dead Hearts, can say but little upon such copious and glorious Subjects, but those of Angels and Saints can expatiate wonderfully and with infinite Pleasure upon them. What unspeakable Life, Force, and Energy, have these to quicken and animate them! How does the Exhibitions and Appearances of the divine Majesty work upon them? How has some small Emanations of divine Glory and Goodness sometimes transported Souls here below, and carried them forth in fervent, joyful Praises to the Lord! but how much more may we conclude the fuller and greater Appearances of God in Heaven does so!

2. THE particular Worship of the blessed Trinity consists in Acknowledgments of the personal Proprieties, Perfections, Relations, Works, and Operations that belong and are particular to each Person. Besides the infinite Matter of Adoration and Praise that the glorious Godhead yields Angels and Saints in general, (of which under the last) there is an inexhaustible Source of Matter for Worship, resulting from a particular Consideration of the blessed Trinity, when we view

view them distinctly; for each of them are glorious Objects of Worship. Every one of the sacred Persons will yield infinite Occasion for Thanksgivings, and will be Subjects copious enough to employ and exercise them in, everlastingly.

THE worshipping and magnifying one Person of the Trinity will not be to the Depression or dishonouring of the rest, for they will all have their due and suitable Acknowledgments and be glorified in the Praises of one another. The Father will be pleased in the Worship rendered to God the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and they will be so likewise in that that is paid to God the Father. If he be honoured, the Son and Holy Ghost will be honoured, and in the Honours of the Son and Holy Ghost, the Father will be so likewise. And what can be more direct and full to this Purpose, than that of our blessed Lord, *John v. 22, 23. The Father hath committed all Judgment to the Son, that all Men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who hath sent him.* But we will reduce this great Subject to Particulars.

1. THE Duty of the Blessed in Heaven perform'd to the first Person of the Trinity will consist in the Worship or Adoration of those Perfections, Relations, and Works that are peculiar to him. Now amongst these we may reckon the infinite Glory of his Person, the unconceiveable Act of the eternal Generation of the Son, his Relation to him and the holy Ghost. To which we may add the Works of Creation, Providence, and Redemption, with more that are unknown to us. Upon the Account of the Work of Creation, we read the Angels worship him, and sing his Praises (and by Consequence we may

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may infer, they do the same, as to his Works.) *Job xxxviii. 7. When the Morning Stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for Joy.* The Chaldee Paraphrase renders it, the Armies of Angels shouted for Joy, sung the Triumphs of their, and the World's Creator, celebrated his Praises in perfect Concord and Harmony for this glorious Work. And we have the like angelical Hymn or Song in *Rev. iv. 11. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power, for thou hast created all Things, and for thy Pleasure they are and were created.* Here again they magnify the holy and eternal God as shining forth in the Glory of his Works. By him and for him, by his efficient Will, and for his complacential Will they were created, and are preserved and ordered. The Angels rejoice herein, because the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God are gloriously seen in the Things that are made, *Rom. i. 20.* Blessed Spirits look upon these Works, and see God in them, in a fuller and clearer Manner, than we are able to do, and see the Fulness of Beauty and Excellency in them, that none besides them can attain unto. Oh how wonderful do God's Works appear to the Saints in Heaven! And the like hereunto might be asserted and concluded, touching the Work of Providence, not only as to a general, but a particular one, that has been exercis'd towards the Saints, during their Passage through the World and the unexpressible Care that has been vouchsafed in bringing them to Glory. How will they magnify that watchful Eye of divine Goodness that has performed so many kind Offices about them, and what Hymns will they sing in the Praises of it! What we have said of the former, holds good as to the Work of Redemption,

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as God the Father is concern'd in it. *viz.* As to the Contrivance, and Plat-Form of it, and giving so glorious a Blessing to the World, as that of a Saviour and Redeemer; in which Sense it is ascribed to him, *John* iii. 16. *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life.* And this we find to be the Matter and Subject of another of the Angels Songs, *Luke* ii. 13, 14. *And suddenly there was with the Angel a Multitude of the heavenly Host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the Highest, Good-will towards Men.* Thus forward they are to give him the Glory of this glorious Work, that belongs to him for it. What a Theme is this to them in Heaven! And what a one should it be to us on Earth!

FROM the Works of God we may proceed to consider his Relations, which are an eminent and worthy Ground of Praise: These result and spring from his Works. The Saints in Heaven celebrate his Praises as their Creator, Law-giver, Governor and Benefactor. The Godly on Earth do it, *Psalm* c. 3. *It is he that has made us, and not we ourselves:* And surely so great a Point is not omitted by the Blessed in Heaven. God's wise Management and Government in the Kingdom of Nature, even tho' expir'd, will not be forgotten, but be remembred, as well as those that belong to the Kingdom of Grace and the Redeemer. To this we might add the Relation of a Father, and that in a twofold Sense, either as a Father in common, and at large, *1 Cor. viii. 6. To us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things:* Or as a Father in a peculiar Sense, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him of all his People. Upon this

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this Account we find the Apostle frequently blessing God, making it a special Subject of Thank-givings under the Gospel. Eph. i. 3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Chap. v. 23. *Giving Thanks always for all Things to God and the Father.* Col. i. 3. *We give Thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* And Ver. 12. *Giving Thanks unto the Father, which has made us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.* Chap. iii. 17. *Giving Thanks to God and the Father by him.* 1 Pet. i. 3. *Blessed be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* This Relation, in the special Sense of it, is in and through Christ: By him it is that this glorious Privilege is conferr'd upon any. Now this being so wonderful a Relation, we may rationally conclude it will be one String that will be much touch'd upon in Heaven, and many a triumphant Song of Praise sung for it. They can never forget how they were instated and invested with so honourable a Dignity as this is, nor be silent in the Remembrance of it; that he was pleas'd to become their Father, and adopt them for his Children. Another Relation that God stands in to his People is that of a Benefactor, the Donor and Author of Mercies, of all Grace and Blessings. In 2 Cor. i. 3. he is call'd the *Father of Mercies.* And Eph. i. 3. said to bless us with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places in Christ. God represents himself more by Mercy and Goodness under the Gospel Dispensation, rather and more than by any other Attribute. He is an infinite Sea of Love, without Banks and Bounds. So that by this we may see, that part of the heavenly Work consists in a Recollection, Remembrance, and recounting all the great and glorious Acts of his

Mercies

Mercies and Benefactions ; and rendering to him the Glory of them in the highest, never-ceasing, and endless Praises and Thanksgivings. But amongst all his Gifts and Mercies they most eminently praise and bless him for the unspeakable Gift of the Lord Redeemer, and all the Trains of Mercies that he leads the Way to, and that follow after him. With Praises and Thanksgivings for a Redeemer, and our Redemption by him, both Worlds should be fill'd, ever fill'd and replenish'd with them ; but especially so is that above. In short, with such a Worship as this is God the Father worshipped ; for such Mercies is he celebrated and acknowledged, with Praises and Thanksgivings, that are beyond Imagination. With these do the Celestial Palaces echo and resound for ever : Such as this is the Work of Heaven ; yea, such should be our Work on Earth, and such will ours be there, if we can arrive thereunto.

It must be acknowledged, that some of the foremention'd Subjects of Worship and Praise are not so peculiar to God the Father, but they are ascribed and do belong to the other sacred Persons of the Trinity ; yet they are mostly attributed to him, and spoken of in Scripture, as properly his own.

2. THE Service and Worship perform'd to the Son of God, the Lord Redeemer, consists in giving him the Honour and Glory (with other Acts of like Kind) that belong to his Person, and glorious Undertakings. The Work of Redemption and Salvation of lost Man by Jesus Christ being the most eminent of all God's Works, calls for the highest Celebrations. And it's observable, that there are more Doxologies or Forms of Praise for our Redemption, given to

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to Christ by the Gospel Church, recorded in Scripture, than there are upon any other Accounts. See 1 Tim. vi. 16. *To whom* (speaking of Christ, in ver. 14.) *be Honour and Power everlasting.* 2 Pet. iii. 18. *To him be Glory both now and for ever. Amen.* Rev. i. 5. *Unto him that loved us, and wash'd us from our Sins in his own Blood: To him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever.* We have the like to this, Chap. v. 11, 12. *And I heard the Voice of many Angels round about the Throne, and the Beasts and the Elders, saying with a loud Voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive Power, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Blessing.* We may probably conclude that these Scriptures contain a Scheme and Draught of Celestial Worship; for the Phrase is manifestly allusive to that State, and the Text saith expressly that it is the Song of the Angels, and Interpreters conceive they are brought in as joyning with the Churches on Earth in the Praises of Christ; And what can we think but that glorified Saints joyn with them herein, and this is a full Intimation of what's done in Heaven?

By this we see that the Lord Redeemer is an Object of Worship in Heaven, and has a great Share in the Adorations of the Blessed there. Now we may conceive he is worshipped and adored there upon manifold Accounts, and upon some such as these following: As because of his eternal Generation, Psalm ii. 7. *Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee.* By which we see he hath a Preheminence above the Angels, and is declared to be the Son of God, *being the Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person, and upholding all Things by the Word of his Power,* Heb. i. 3. and consequently God the

the Father would have him honour'd with the same Honour that he himself is honour'd withal. So likewise for his amazing Transactions and Undertakings in the Redemption, Recovery and Salvation of a perishing World, with the Actions leading thereunto, his Incarnation, Humiliation, &c. for the Execution of which great Affair he assumed the Office of Prophet, Priest and King, became a Sacrifice, died and paid a Price for us, and ransom'd us by his Blood. These are the common and frequent Arguments of many of those Doxologies that are given to Christ in the Scriptures, as some of the forecited Texts manifest: To which others might be subjoyn'd, *Rev. v. 9. Thou wast slain, and hast redeem'd us to God by thy Blood.* This and such like Forms of Thanksgiving do very well suit and are agreeable to the heavenly State; tho' they be primarily calculated for the Church on Earth. Now these grand Points of our Redemption, whether consider'd in common, or distinctly and apart, are boundless and infinite Matter and Arguments for Thanksgiving. These great Achievements are written indelibly on the Hearts of all that partake of the saving Benefits of them on Earth; but how much more deeply are they engraven on blessed Spirits, upon whom they have had their full Accomplishment and Effects? How much is it beyond all Expression to relate to what degree they are affected with it, that they should be ransom'd in such stupendous and amazing Methods from everlasting Misery, and advanc'd and rais'd to such Heights of Glory! What can be more surprizing and overcoming? What Rejoycing and Triumph do they express in that Love and Grace that has done such great Things for them? And what

Honour and Glory, what Praise and Thanksgivings are they ready to return for it? Those that are brought through all Dangers, and have their Salvation perfected, understand this glorious Work in a better Manner than we can now conceive of. Oh the Transports that they are carried forth with upon the Account of it! These glorious Matters are a Spring, an unexhaustible Spring of Worship and Adoration in Heaven. With the Sense of this, they will ever be replenished and overcome. The Glory, Riches and Greatness of saving Grace, is never fully exalted and magnified but there. Hitherto we may refer or reduce those glorious Acts, the Preservation of the Saints by his Might and Power, keeping them in all Hazards, securing them in all Dangers, his actual Salvation of them, and bringing them safe to Glory, and in all, performing the Office of Captain of Salvation for them. How will all this, this in the Whole of it, this in every Branch of it, affect their Hearts, and excite them to all Acts of Honour, Adoration and Thanksgiving?

YET again the Saints will find great Work and Employment, will be much exercis'd about the Glory, Power and Dominion, that the Lord Redeemer will assume and hath in Heaven; the Glory of his Person as God-Man, in the Conjunction of the divine and humane Nature, which he will be there invested with, upon his Ascension and Exaltation thither. And this is what he comforts his Disciples with, *John xvii. 24. Father I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, may behold my Glory.* i. e. the Excellency, Clarity and Splendor of his Person, the Union of the two Natures in the Person, of Christ; this we may call the august and consummate Glory of

of the Lord Redeemer. Thus he will be a glorious Object of, and merit the highest Adorations. And hence are all commanded to pay Reverence to him, *Phil. ii. 10. That at the Name of Jesus every Knee should bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things in Earth, and Things under the Earth.* While he was here in the World, he was a King, but when he ascended up on high, he was a crowned King, and God undertook to make good that Prophecy of him, mention'd *Isa. xlv. 23. That every Knee should bow to him.* So that we see here is a Connexion of Power, Authority and Dominion, with the Glory of his Person, by which he is King under God of all the World, and especially of his Church. And it is very observeable that all the Angelical Choirs, and consequently those of the Saints likewise; are commanded to worship and give Honour to Christ, in that Text, *Heb. i. 6. And again, when he brings in his first Begotten into the World, he saith, And let all the Angels of God worship him.* This is quoted from *Psal. xcvi. 7. Worship him all ye Gods, all ye Elohim.* Some refer this to Christ's coming into the World, others to his Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven, when the Decree was proclaim'd of his being the great King, and had an actual Exaltation far above all Gods. According whereunto it is that our Lord's Ascension to Glory, was celebrated with the Acclamations and Praises of Angels and Saints. *Psa. xlvi. 5. The Lord is gone up with a Shout, the Lord with the Sound of a Trumpet.* At which Time he was invested with the forementioned glorious Royalties of Kingship, Power and Dominion over all Things. And if he was thus worship'd at his Entrance and Inauguration upon these Royalties, may we not with utmost

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Reason conclude that he will be so continuall
and to everlasting?

WHAT great Materials, Grounds, Arguments and Motives are these, for the Worship of the Lord Redeemer in Glory, for an everlasting Veneration of him? To what an Height will his Dignity, Honour and Glory be advanc'd and rais'd, and what good Reason will there be for using and uttering that Form of Thanksgiving; *worthy is the Lamb to receive Honour, Glory Blessing and Praise.* Worthy, infinitely worthy; worthy in the highest Degree, everlastingly worthy to have them paid and rendred to him.

To sum up all. With what Joys and Affections do gracious Persons entertain and live by Faith upon Christ, whilst they are in the present State? But with how much more abundant ones will they do it in Heaven! and rejoice in him with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory, when they shall behold him and see him crowned with the forementioned and other Glories, and feast their Souls upon him everlastingly. What a Sight would it be to see all the Blessed, paying Homage and Worship to him in that World?

3. THE distinct Worship of the Holy Ghost consists in the Adoration of his personal Perfections, Offices and Operations in the Work of Man's Salvation. We take it for granted, that the Reader will own that the Holy Spirit is God, and has a great Agency in that Affair. He has all divine Properties given and ascribed to him in the Scriptures, in common with the sacred Persons, of God the Father and the Son, which is a certain Ground of the Performance of divine Worship to him, (of which we have spoken before) and therefore will have it paid to him distinctly

tinctly. Thus will the third sacred Person be honoured as the other two are. We might hereunto subjoin that his Operations being of a divine Nature, are a Proof of his Godhead. None can do these Works that he does upon Souls, but himself, and one that is a very God. His Offices upon redeemed ones, are many, very endearing, and make him for ever precious, and infinitely valuable to them. His Works upon Souls are Works of Creation, and that of the most glorious Kind. It is his Hand and Touch that forms the new Creature; his Pencil, by which the Lines of it are drawn. He does (as we may say) put the last Hand to the great Work of the Renovation of Souls, *John* iii. 5. *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a Man be born again of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* We might here descend to all the Parts of the new Creature, and we shall find his Agency in all of them. The enlightning Work upon the Soul, making it to see the wonderful Objects and Things of Religion, is his Work. The Infusion of Life into it, belongs to him. The mollifying the Will, giving it a holy Love and Willingness, and directing it to make a right Choice of Things, is of him. The great Work of Sanctification and Holiness, engraving Holiness to the Lord upon Hearts, are his Works; *Tit. iii. 5. Not by Works of Righteousness, which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us by the washing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.* He is a Spirit of Life and Light, of Love and Power to the Soul. God the Father and the Son work at a Distance (as we may term it) for, and in order to the Salvation of Man; but the holy Spirit and his Effluxes are immediate Agents

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upon the Soul. Every Faculty is taken into his Hand, and molded and formed by him; he brings the Undertakings of Christ close to the Soul, and applies his Blood, Death and Sacrifice unto it, and unites it in an indissoluble Bond unto him.

AND as the Agent of Christ he conserves the new Creature; carries on the Work begun in it to Perfection, even to the heavenly Kingdom, and the Glorification of it above.

Now these Things, with much more of this Kind, when apprehended, as Angels and Saints will conceive of them; and when all his holy Works shall be perfected upon Souls, and the Whole be finish'd, will afford infinite and unspeakable Ground of Adoration, and be Matter for many celestial Hymns and Doxologies to this sacred Spirit.

AND how easy will it be for the Blessed above to form Songs of Praise and Adoration hence? As for Example: "Worthy is the Blessed Spirit, "the Great Quickener and Sanctifier of Souls, to "have all Glory, Thanksgivings, and Praises ren- "dred unto him by Angels and Saints. Singing "to this purpose: I was a dark Dungeon, till "thou sent in thy Rays and Light unto me, and "had been overwhelm'd and perish'd in Darkness "and Unregeneracy for ever, but for thy illumi- "ting Beams, those sweet and blessed Rays that "brought Light and Purity into my Soul; the "happy Change made upon me, the blessed Work "of Sanctification, with all the rest, is owing to "him, as the Author of it. Thou hast quickned "us, when we were dead in Trespasses and Sins; "taken them away and sanctified us, when we lay "in the horrid Mire and Pollutions of a sinful "World;

"World, and made us meet to be Partakers of the
"Inheritance of the Saints in Light, Col. i. 12."

THUS we see something of the Worship that is perform'd in particular of the Blessed Trinity by the glorious Inhabitants of the superior World. But how little a Part is known of it? How few of its Excellencies can be brought to light, and laid open by blind and ignorant Mortals, that dwell in Clouds and Darkness?

C H A P. V.

*Where we shall speak of the celestial Praises,
Consider the Nature and Properties of the
Worship in Heaven. A Case propos'd
touching the Intercession of Christ, with
respect to the Worship of Heaven. The
celestial Work and Worship should be a
Pattern of Worship to the Church Militant.
Lastly, Consider the Obedience of
the Blessed in Heaven.*

ROM the Consideration of the Work and Worship of Heaven in the General, we are now to proceed to that particular and special Branch of it, the Praises of Heaven. And this being, as we have reason to believe, what we may call the chief and great Work of that World, and a Subject of such Excellency,

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cellency, we must give it a Place in this Discourse; and hereby shall better understand why it is the Work appointed them there.

First, We are to take under Consideration that great Subject, the Praises and Thanksgivings of the Blessed in Heaven.

Now we may conceive these to lye in an high Estimation, Admiration and Adoration of God, and the Blessed Trinity, the divine Excellencies, Perfections, Works and Acts, in an Extolling and Magnifying of them, and in some external Declarations and Manifestations; tho' we are at a Loss thereabouts, and cannot tell how they are express'd. Praises and Blessings are an Acknowledgment inwardly and outwardly of these Excellencies: Thanksgiving respects Mercies and Benefits received, and is a Return in a Way of Gratitude for them.

1. **PRAISES** and **Thanksgivings** are **Acts** of **Worship** of the **sublimest** and **highest** **Kind**. All **Worship** in the **Whole**, and in the **Parts** of it, is **great** and **solemn**; but some is **more noble** and **excellent** than others: Amongst which we may reckon this before us, which most properly belongs to **Heaven**. **Perfect Work** and **a perfect State** and **World** are **very agreeable** to one another. We may call this Branch of their **Worship**, the **perfect Work** of **perfect Beings** in a **perfect State**, where **God** is **perfectly known**, **understood** and **enjoy'd**. These are **Duties** of a **superlative Excellency**, and the **noblest Service** that can be perform'd to him, the **highest** that the **Tongues** of **Men** and **Angels** can render to the **Lord**; for they have the **highest Objects**, the **glorious Excellencies** and **Works** of the **ever-blessed God** in their **constant View**. And these **Acts** of **Worship** are the **most direct** and **fullest Means**

Means of honouring and glorifying God, having a special Aptitude and Fitnes in 'em for it, above all other Performances; for herein we give him his chiefest Due, the Glory of his Perfections and most eminent Works. It is no wonder then that this is the Work of blessed Spirits in Heaven, and not a temporary, but an eternal and never-ceasing Work: And hence it is that they are call'd upon to praise God, *Psalm ciii. 20. Bless the Lord, ye his Angels that excell in Strength.* And *cxlvi. 2. Praise ye him all his Angels.* True, this Form of Speech is in the imperative Mood, as if it were hortatory; yet it is to be understood in an indicative Sense, as a Narrative of their Work and Busines, and of what they do in Heaven.

PRAISES and Thanksgivings are the Duties of this dark State and World; they have their Place and Room here, but are not so genuine and agreeable to it as that World above is. Here there are many things to obstruct and allay 'em; but there, there's much to enflame and raise 'em higher. But this leads to the next.

2. HEAVEN is a Place where they have peculiar Advantages for Praises and Thanksgivings; even as on the contrary we are under Disadvantages in this World for it in many Respects. Heaven is, as we have already observ'd, the proper Region for this sacred Work; but our present State is as *Babylon* was to the *Jewisb Songs, a strange Land,* *Psalm cxxxvii. 4.* Such sublime Work is in part above so low a State as this we are now sojourning in. Here indeed it is begun, but we practise much like Learners, and not as Proficients, by way of Introduction, and leading to Heaven, the World of Praises. And here we might consider the particular Advantages they have above for it. [I. IN

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[1. IN Heaven they have a true Estimate and Sense of God's Perfections, Mercies, and gracious Dispensations. A full Apprehension, thorough Knowledge and Understanding of these, is a great Help and Advantage to this blessed World. Tho' they cannot comprehend God, yet they know him far more clearly, and in a higher Degree, than we are able to reach unto. Their Knowledge and Apprehension of Objects bear an Adequateness and Suitableness to the heavenly State. The Mysteries of Creation and Providence, the Redemption of Mankind, and all God's other Works, are laid open to their Views and Contemplations: Which will be special Preparatives and Incentives to this great and heavenly Work, inflame their Hearts, tune and put them into Postures of sacred Melody. This is their Happiness above. But we here labour under an Ignorance, Misconception, and shallow Apprehensions of God and his Works, together with a low Estimate of them; and this makes our Affections greatly flag, and is a great Hindrance to us in this happy Duty.

[2. THEY have all holy Qualifications, Dispositions, and Inclinations to this Work. Their Hearts are perfectly fitted for it; tuned, prepared and set for the highest Notes. They are bless'd with that happy Disposition of returning back again upon God, in Praises and Thanksgivings, what he has bestow'd in Benefits and gracious Acts upon them. They are not, as we are here below, for sinking his Mercies, and burying them in Oblivion and Forgetfulness; but for giving him the Revenue, and paying the highest Tribute they are able, for all that they have received from him; lodging the Glory of all in his Hands. We can

can at best but get some small Measures of Preparations for this Work; but they are perfected, and want no Requisites thereunto. It was this made the Psalmist so often remark to us, that his Heart was fixed for the Praises of the Lord, *Psalm cviii. 1.* The original Word signifies to be fitted and prepared for Work. A godly Man would be always ready to serve God; and we are assured blessed Spirits are so in the highest Sense. Praise (saith one) is the most spiritual Work, and requires the most spiritual Frame of Heart, and therefore the chief of that Work is reserved to a State wherein we shall be wholly (both Soul and Body) Spiritual.

OH how rare is it to find Hearts in our Assemblies prepared for holy Work! But in Heaven there are none else, amongst all those vast Multitudes of blessed Ones.

[3. T H E Y have their Mercies perfected and compleated. Heaven is a State of Mercies consummated. True, it is not so with the Blessed yet in an absolute Sense, but comparatively it is. They have many of their Mercies in full, and have attain'd the Ends of them: They are perfected to them, and the rest they are assur'd of, and are waiting in a believing Expectation of them; have the main of them, and are out of doubt of the Gleanings that are behind. They are in Possession of the greater Part, and these are Earnests and Assurances of those that are to come and in Reversion; so that virtually and in a comprehensive Sense, they have all at present. Now this Consideration is a great Argument and Help towards the perfecting their Praises and Thanksgivings. The more we have to praise God for, the more our Mercies are encreas'd by

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new Additions to them, so much the more does it enflame our Hearts and heighten our Praises: And could the Godly see what they shall be put into the Possession of, and have confer'd upon them in a while, it would greatly conduce to the Enhancement of this Duty now, and be a mighty Help to them herein. We have indeed the Beginnings of glorious Mercies in this Life, but not the Finishing of them; nor can we take the Dimensions of them in their full Proportion, which is a great Damp and Hinderance at present to our Services of this Kind.

[4.] THEY have the glorious Objects and Authors of their Mercies, and of all that has been wrought and done for them, in their View. The Great God shines forth to the Blessed under that affecting Consideration, as the God of all their Mercies, as one that hath effected and wrought for them whatever has been given them, as the Fountain and Donor of all. Now this is a special Help to this Work. If we be in the Presence of a common Benefactor, we find it exciting to us; and surely much more is it so to behold the universal Author of all our good Things. Thus the more God is in our Minds when we are remembering his Goodness, the warmer are our Praises; and the more we set him at a Distance from us, and forget him, so much the more we flag in such Services. We cannot then conceive how enkindling and enflaming the Sight of God the Father, Son and Spirit, will be to them above. They do not lose the Sight of God, nor behold him thro' a dark and gross Medium as we do here, but thro' a glorious one, *Face to Face*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

[5.] THEY have great Advantages and Helps from one another in the Duty of Praise and Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving. The Saints in Glory are a great Means of the Excitation of each other. This is hinted in the Text, *One cried unto another.* They help to rouze up and quicken one another. So it is with them, their Incense is set a burning by Fire fetch'd from the Altars of others. Thus are they Patterns and Examples, Helpers and Provokers of one another's Zeal and Fervours in this blessed Work; tune each others Harps, and encrease the heavenly Melody and Songs thereby. But of the Praises of blessed Spirits consider'd, as joyn't and social, we shall have occasion to speak afterwards. That's the Second.

3. The Praises of the Blessed above are a sacred Compound, made up and constituted of excellent Mixtures and Ingredients. There is no Composition, not the sweetest, like unto them, or that can compare with them. They want nothing; have every thing to enrich and make them acceptable. Their Ingredients are holy Love, Admiration and Delight, Joy and Gladness, and all other sacred and sweet Affections and Graces; yea, and more than we can imagine. As they may have new Acts or Operations in Heaven; so may be they have other, or some Graces there that we know nothing of in this present State. Their Praises are constituted of Transports, Ecstacies, Raptures, Elevations and Motions, that are beyond Conception. How sweet must such Services be! They are all pure, without any Allays or debasing Mixtures, and are express'd and utter'd in the highest Notes, and in the most rais'd Strains; and are not liable to any Descents, Degeneracies, Periods, or any thing of that Kind. They are of the Nature of a rich Incense, perfum'd with

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all that's sacred to make them grateful to the Lord. For this Reason one speaks thus: " Oh then what Delight shall I have to see the perfected Church in Heaven, and to joyn with these and all the Saints in another Kind of Worship than we can here conceive of ! " The Smoke of the Incense from the Golden Altar was accounted fragrant and savoury to God ; But how much more will the Incense of the celestial Services be so, that will ascend continually from the sacred Altars of their pure and enflamed Hearts ?

Thus it is, and much more so, as to the Praises of Heaven : But ours on Earth are oft nothing but an empty Sound ; Noise, without that holy Matter ; wanting all recommending Properties, those Excellencies that they should be replenish'd withall ; and, which is worse, are made up of Weakness, Deadness, Imperfections, and Blemishes of all Kinds.

4. THE Praises and Thanksgivings of the Blessed in Heaven will have a great Variety and Copiousness, as to the Matter of them. We have already asserted a Variety in the celestial Worship, and now we should consider the Variety of their Praises. Heaven will consist of a Confluence of all Nations, redeem'd by the Blood of the Lamb : And hence is that, Rev. v. 9. *For thou wast slain, and hast redeem'd us to God by thy Blood out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation.* And each of these will have a Variety of Mercies to bless God for. Besides the Subject Matter of their Praises in common, in the divine Perfections and Glories, together with the general Mercies relating to their Salvation ; they will have the particular, peculiar ones, the Circumstances of their Conversion ; in what

what Way and Manner the Grace of God made it's Entrance, and prevail'd upon them; the Providences and Mercies of their Pilgrimage; their manifold Preservations in Dangers and Temptations; their Imprisonments and Sufferings, together with the various Methods of bringing them to Glory, &c. all which will be many; and that these will be the Subject of their Praises, and be comprehended in their Thanksgivings, cannot be doubted. We have a great many Mercies to bless God for in this Life; Psalm xl. 5. *Many, O Lord my God, are all thy manifold Works which thou hast done, and thy Thoughts which are to us-ward; they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.* So likewise in Psalm cxxxix. 17. *How precious are thy Thoughts unto me! How great is the Sum of them!* Thus we say it is on Earth: But in Heaven there will be an infinite Addition to them; and the Mercies that were buried in Oblivion, will be revived and remembred afresh: So that laying all these together, there will be abundant Matter of Thanksgiving, Work enough to employ and exercise their Praises upon, an infinite Variety of Strings to touch thro' everlasting, to create a delightful Melody of Praises; especially if we consider that some Mercies themselves will be so copious, of so great a Magnitude, as to yield infinite Occasion, eternal Matter for Praises and Acknowledgments: And by reason of this their Praises will be continually new and fresh. And therefore let none suggest and say, Surely in some or many Ages they will be exhausted, and want Matter to praise God for; for boundless Mercies require boundless, never-ceasing Remembrances.

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M A Y we not then cry out, Oh the boundless and unexhaustible Accounts and Narratives of Mercies and gracious Dispensations they will have to enumerate for all Ages! And the Matter of Praise they will be furnish'd with and form thereupon into everlasting Hallelujahs! If with our Songs of Praise here we have reason to annex, *thy Mercy endures for ever*, how much more will there be cause to do so in Heaven?

A N D as a further Confirmation of the Argument we are upon, may we not assert that some of the celestial Songs are antiquated, and some new ones commence and take place in the stead thereof. Amongst the former we may reckon that of the Angels, sung in Commemoration of the Work of Creation, mention'd Job xxxviii. 7. with others of the like Nature. And upon the same Ground we may suppose there are new ones, as those Texts seem to manifest, Rev. v. 9. and ch. xiv. 3. *And they sung a new Song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the Book.—And they sung, as it were, a new Song before the Throne, and before the four Beasts and the Elders.* If this glorious Scene be to be understood of the Church on Earth, yet it's drawn in a celestial Form or Dialect; which holds forth something to us of the Nature of the Worship and Praises of that World, and does more than hint to us what's done above.

5. W E may observe the Order and Method that there will be in the celestial Anthems. It's observable that some of *David's Psalms of Praise* are written in an alphabetical Order, as the iid, cxiith, and cxlvth, each Verse beginning with the *Hebrew Letters*, as they lye in order of Succession: Surely then we may think the celestial Praises much more methodical. Heaven is the World

World of Order above all others. There is wonderful Order in it in every thing, and consequently it will be so in all their Worship, and particularly in their Praises. There will be the utmost Regularity in the Enumeration of the Instances of God's Goodness and Bounty to them; and the same it will be as to their Thanksgivings to the utmost Degree. Every Mercy will be commemorated in its Place; the Greater before the Less, and Spiritual Ones before those that were Corporal: Those that had a relation to the future State, and that are eternal, before those that respected the present Life, and were temporary; and so it will be as to their Praises. Some may think there will not be a particular Enumeration of their Mercies, but we may believe it will be commonly so. And this will be one Glory, and a great one too, of this Part of Worship. Order is beautiful and comely in all things, and particularly in the Worship of God; and most of all will that of Heaven be so, which will be accurate above all other whatsoever. Confused and disorderly Praises are not consistent with so perfect a World, so glorious a State as it is. It oft happens, alas! that the Services we present to God here are so, but there will be nothing of this in Heaven. And what we may further observe is, that this Order and Method will extend to every thing in Heaven, (of which we have mention'd something before) as well as to their Worship: But this is a Subject of so high a Nature, that none but those that enjoy it are able to describe it. It was upon this Account that the Queen of *Sheba* was struck with such an Admiration of *Solomon's* Court, *1 Kings x. 5.* But how much more will glorified Spirits find

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reason to be transported with the ravishing Order of the celestial one?

16. THE Praises and Thanksgivings of Heaven may be consider'd in a social and joyn't Sense, as they are the Exercise and Employment of the whole Community, or Communities of Angels and Saints. Hitherto we have view'd them as the Work of the Blessed, singly; but now we shall look upon them conjunctly and together, as they are form'd and rank'd into distinct Assemblies for this Work, and exercis'd therein. If there be so much Sweetness in the Praises of one gracious Soul, much more in a Society of them, and still more in a greater Body of Saints, but most of all in that of the Church Triumphant, where all will concur and joyn to the utmost in such glorious Work, even Myriads and Multitudes that no Man can number, *Rev. vii. 9.*

Now under this Head we may observe,

I. THE Harmony that there will be in their Worship and Praises: Like the primitive Church, they're of *one Heart, and one Soul, Acts iv. 32.* yea, to a greater Degree than they were. The Church Triumphant has a perfect Unity and Coalition in all things; an internal Harmony and an external one, in their Hearts and Affections, and in their Hymns and Songs, and in their Sounds and Voices. Unity and Harmony are two glorious Properties of Societies, and so it will be especially in Heaven. There will be an unanimous Conjunction of Angels and Saints, as well as of the Saints among themselves; a perfect Concord and Consort, without the least Discord or Disagreement. The Christian Church, upon the Desiruction of *Babylon*, are represented praising God for it with one and the same Song, *yea,*

yea, with one and the same Word, *Allelujahs*, *Rev. xix. 8.* And why may there not be something like this, a verbal Harmony in Heaven? nay, we can think of no Word that's more agreeable and becoming that Word than this Word *Alleluja* is. In short, all their Harps and Instruments concur to augment the Harmony of their happy Services.

THIS Consideration sheds a Glory upon, gives a Lustre to, the Praises of Heaven, makes them more delightful and ravishing. What will it be to dwell in such a World to bear a Part in such Work, and reap the Benefit of the Enjoyment of it? How happy would it be if the discordant Church of Christ on Earth would endeavour to form themselves according to this blessed Pattern, draw down this celestial Spirit of Peace and Concord to dwell with us here below!

[2. THE Gratefulness, Melody and Sweetness of the Worship and Praises of Angels and Saints. This results from the last. Melody and Sweetness flows from Harmony. Some tell us, that the Spheres or heavenly Orbs make a Musick in their Motion: However that is, we are sure it holds true of the Praises of the Blessed, which are musical and ravishing beyond Conception or Expression? These do infinitely surpass the sweetest Sounds and Melodies that ever were heard: They are grateful to God himself, and what will they then be to them that are employ'd in them? The Musick of the Jewish Temple was very melodious, and probably exceeded all that ever was perform'd on Earth; but this of the celestial One infinitely surpasses it. It is not improper to conceive of the Praises of the Blessed under this Metaphor, for by this

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the Worship of the Gospel-Church under the Defection of Antichrist is express'd, *Rev. xiv. 2.*
And I heard a Voice from Heaven, as the Voice of many Waters, and as the Voice of a great Thunder; and I heard the Voice of Harpers harping with their Harps. And may we not then make it an Emblem of the Services of the Saints, and illustrate it very aptly hereby? What Matter of Entertainment then will this be to them in Heaven? What will it be to hear from all the Quarters of the blessed Regions this surprizing Melody, these joyful Sounds? We may justly reckon this one of the Felicities and Delights of Heaven; yea, the Virtue of it should reach and strike us with Pleasure here below, and make us send up our Hearts to that World, and set us a listening to over-hear (if it might be) the heavenly Musick. It is pleasant to hear a Society of devout Christians praising the Lord; it would be yet more so, if we could hear all the Assemblies on Earth in Praises at the same time: But how much more would it be so to hear those of Heaven?

DAVID, now he's in Heaven, quite exceeds what the Sweetness of his Harp was here below: He sings the Praises of God in far more ravishing Strains than he did in this Life. Let us use the poor dull Harps we have, to make the best Melody in Praises to the Lord, that we are now able to do; and then we shall change it for more elevated ones in time.

WE may be assur'd the Praises of Heaven are audible, loud and vocal, and that they perform them with all their Might: We find they have been so by some Instances of them on Earth, and therefore we may suppose it is so above; and were it otherways, soine Branches of the Glory

Glory of their Services would be cut off, and lost. Oh that we had Palates and Appetites to relish heavenly things! The Delights and Sweetness of Religion should drown all other Matters to us.

7. We might note in what Manner the heavenly Services of Praises and Thanksgivings are perform'd: Why certainly every way suitable to that State and World the Saints are exalted to, *viz.* in a glorying and triumphant Manner, as becomes Kings and Priests, Conquerors and Crowned Ones, the Heirs of Glory and everlasting Blessedness; not with Mixtures of Fear, tho' with holy Reverence, but with perfect Joy and Gladness, as is agreeable to the Kingdom of God; which is a Kingdom of Glory, and that shines and appears with utmost Majesty and Lustre. In this manner, and a thousand times more than we can conceive and express are the Services of the sacred Temple perform'd above. Oh blessed and happy Spirits they, that are thus employ'd to bear a Part in Work of so glorious a Kind and Nature as this is! This one would think should be enough to bring us into a Love, Acquaintance and Communion with this blessed World, and fill us with Desires after it.

ALL things are perform'd in Heaven with a becoming Greatness and Magnificence. As there was every thing in Solomon's House answerable to the State of a Court, even so it is in that World. There is an Air and Spirit of Meanness upon the Godly whilst they are here, and every thing they do agrees therewith; but in Heaven there is quite another Temperament of things, Managements peculiar to it.

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8. We may in the last Place consider the Resultance of the celestial Worship and Praises. It is a Branch of the Glory of Heaven. The Worship and Presence of God bespangles and gives a Lustre to any Place. This was the greatest Glory of the Jewish Temple, made it brighter than all its other Ornaments, *Psal. xxix.*

2. *Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness*, or in his glorious Sanctuary; and much more surely will that above do so to Heaven, because of the surpassing Excellency of it. True, the greatest Glory of Heaven will consist in the Splendor of the Place, the Emissions and Manifestations of the Divine Majesty; but the Worship and Services of it will be an Addition and Encrease of its Glory in a lesser Measure, and it will be one Way and Means of Communion amongst themselves: Besides that, it will exercise their Graces, and keep up their Powers to the highest Pitch and State of Elevation, even as we find our Hearts are in the best Tempers when we have been worshipping the Lord. In a Word, Suppose the Worship of Heaven withdrawn thence, what a Vacancy and Alteration would it make there? We may compare it to the eclipsing some of the Luminaries in the celestial Orbs.

THE Second General Head of Discourse is to speak of the Nature and Properties of the celestial Worship and Praises.

SOMETHING has been touch'd upon of this Subject already in the preceding Meditations, but we shall now speak more directly to it. This will be of use to us, and further assist our Conceptions of this great Point, the celestial Worship; and, I hope, help to raise our Admiration of it yet higher. The Properties and

Qualities

Qualities of things do greatly enoble or debase them.

1. THE Worship of Heaven was the most primitive and early Worship. Angelical Sacrifices were the first of all that were offer'd to the Lord, or the first Sacrifice that was ever offer'd to God was that of Angels, *Job xxxviii. 7. When the Morning Stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for Joy.* The latter Phrase is explicatory of the former. The Angels, as far as we know, were at this Time but very lately created, and yet we find them singing Anthems to God to congratulate him for the Work of Creation. The original Word in this Scripture signifies to shout for Joy in a Way of Triumph, as when an Army is victorious, and about to divide the Spoil; or to shout and sing, as in the Time of Harvest and Vintage: And tho' this was perform'd so early, yet we have reason to conclude it was not the first of their Worship and Songs of Praise they perform'd to their Creator; for these are immediately due, and should be rendred to God, as soon as the Creature has a Being, when it is made perfect and capable of Acknowledgments to him; and this, we doubt not, the Angels did. And thus we may be sure it was with our first Parents; for as soon as their Beings were compleated, they immediately fell upon the Adorations of their Maker. Such sudden Bonds and Obligations of Duty, do all come under to him. So that antecedent to this Worship of the Angels mention'd in this Text, we may suppose they ador'd their Creator for his glorious Perfections, and forming of them; and from that Period they have continued and kept up the Work of Praising and Serving of him, and will do so for ever.

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God requires, and infinitely deserves, the first Fruits of our Time, Talents, and all we are possess'd of: The Morning of our Lives, First of our Age and Days should be dedicated to him: As he is, so he should have, the *Alpha* and Beginning of all. Early Worship is angelical Worship.

2. THE celestial Worship is constituted of many excellent Qualities; wants not any; and has all embellishing Lines to beautify it. Every thing in Heaven is superlative and transcendent: There is nothing but the Best and Quintessence of things there. More particularly,

[1. It is intirely spiritual and holy; it is so in the highest Sense. Their Worship consists in the pure Operations of pure Spirits. Like clear unmuddied Streams that proceed from a most pure Fountain; and it is such as is exactly agreeable to the infinite and eternal Spirit, the Father of Spirits, to whom it is perform'd, absolutely consonant to the divine Nature, and void and free of every thing that is gross and debasing. Our Worship here below may be denominated spiritual, yet has it many Allays intermix'd with it, much Dross with its Gold; but the Incense they present above is most fragrant. It is prophesied of Gospel Times, as the Glory of them, that *Incense should be offer'd unto the Lord, and a pure Offering*, Mal. i. 11. i. e. Sincere in opposition to Hypocrisy, and Holy in opposition to Impurity: But how much more does this hold true of the heavenly State, where all their Offerings will be so in the most absolute and highest Sense?

[2. THEY will be qualified with Fervency and Zeal. This is another Ingredient, a very sweet

sweet and lovely one for divine Worship. Such active, lively, prepared Beings, must certainly perform a most vital, lively Worship. Angels are call'd Seraphims, *i. e.* Burners, *Psal. civ. 4.* *Who maketh his Angels Spirits, his Ministers a Flame of Fire,* as we observ'd before; and the Spirits of the Just are akin to them. All their Services above are Burnt-Offerings: The Fire of their Altars never goes out, but flames in the highest Degree. Celestial Zeal so far transcends that of the Saints below, that it can scarce come under the same Term, and should rather be express'd by a distinct one; by a Name and Word, that may be we have none here below that will justly and fully answer.

[3. It is unwearied and incessant, *Rev. iv. 8.* *And the four Beasts had each of them six Wings, and they were full of Eyes within; and they rest not Day and Night, saying, Holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.* Some make these Beasts to signify the Angels in Heaven, who glorify God's Attributes; and also the Apostles and Prophets, Evangelists and Pastors, who do their Part in this Work on Earth. Or supposing that this is a Representation only of the Worship of the Church here below, yet we may conclude the Form of it is drawn from above, and that the Style and Dialect of it is fetch'd from thence. It acquaints us what their Worship is, and what ours ought to be, *viz.* frequent, and next to incessant. In Heaven they have no Avocations, nor can the Reason of their Worship cease; for they have continual Matter and Arguments for praising God: They have no Abatements of their Vigour; their Affections are not exhausted and weakned; the Grounds and Reasons for the Cessation of that Work do not reach

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the celestial Temple. Tho' they worship God always, and will do it for ever, yet they are not glutted or tired with it. Constant and perpetual Service is a celestial Privilege, and a most glorious and happy one; and they that serve God most uninterruptedlly, come the nearest to Heaven. A like Text with the former is that, Rev. viii. 14, 15. *And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great Tribulation, and have wash'd their Robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb; therefore they are before the Throne of God, and serve him Day and Night in his Temple.* This Office they chiefly perform when they come to enjoy their Happiness, before the Throne of God, and in the heavenly Temple. And what is their Work there? They *serve him Day and Night.* A Type of which were the Priests under the Law, who, in their Courses, were admitted Day and Night to be employ'd in Temple Service, Psa. cxxxiv. 1. *Bless ye the Lord, all ye Servants of the Lord, which by Night stand in the House of the Lord.* But what was done by many in their Turns there, is now done continually by the Blessed in Heaven; for they are never weary, and there is no Intermission in their Service. Such as this will be the Work of the Saints when they shall be admitted into that most holy Place. Our Lassitudes in Worship spring from our Corruptions, the Weakness of our Graces, the Grossness and Indisposition of our Bodies, with other Reasons that might be assign'd; but they above are perfectly freed from all of this Kind.

[4. It is a most sensible, lowly and humble Worship. The nearer that any Creatures approach the divine Majesty, and are admitted to fuller Views of him; consequently the more they are for exalting him, and also so much the more humble

humble and self-emptied they are. Some tell us that the Saints see all things in God; however, we are sure that in the Glass of the divine Majesty and Glory they have a View of their own Nothingness and Meanness. The highest Worship is, above all others, the most lowly Worship. Thus we find it is as to the best Worshippers on Earth, and the same holds good in Heaven. When Job had got a Sight of God, then more than ever he abhors himself in Dust and Ashes, *Chap. xlii, 5, 6.* *I have heard of thee by the Hearing of the Ear; but now mine Eye sees thee, therefore I abhor my self in Dust and Ashes.* The clearer Manifestations any have of God, the greater and deeper will their Humiliations be. Thus the Prophet *Isaiah*, when in *chap. vi.* he had had the Vision of God's Majesty in the Temple, cries out in *ver. 5.* *Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a Man of unclean Lips.* And thus it was with the Seraphims that are represented as Attendants on the *Schechinah*, *ver. 2.* *With twain they covered their Face, and with twain they covered their Feet, i. e. with their Wings.* These Actions of theirs speak their great Humility and Reverence in their Attendance upon and Worshipping of God; and because they are conscious of an infinite Distance from the divine Perfections, they are ashamed to shew their Faces before an holy God, and dare not behold and look upon him. Of the same Import is that, *Rev. iv. 10,* *The four and twenty Elders fell down before him that sat on the Throne, and cast their Crowns before the Throne;* noting hereby the Greatness of the Homage and Adorations the Church both in Heaven and Earth do and should give to God; making and accounting him as all in all, and themselves as nothing.

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nothing before him. Thus it is with the Blessed in Heaven: What profound Respect do they manifest to, and what Prostrations do they fall into, before an holy God! Thus have they done, and thus will they do for ever. What a glorious Pattern then are they for our Imitation here below! How much may be learn'd from them! Do they thus humble themselves before the Lord? What then shall we vile Sinners do? What Abasements should we fall into before him? Let us make use of this Practice of theirs, as an Example for our Worship on Earth. Are they so much advanced above us, and we so much below them; and yet shall they fall lower at God's Footstool than we do? Let us get the Prints and Sense of the heavenly Services engraven upon our Souls.

[5. It is a most ready and expedite Worship; or a Worship that they will be most ready and expedite to the Performance of. *With twain be did fly.* This we observed at the Beginning of the Discourse noted their Promptness and Forwardness to the Services of Heaven. In God's Errands and about his Work they fly swiftly, *Dan. ix. 21. The Man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the Beginning, being caused to flee swiftly, touched me about the Time of the Evening Oblation.* All their Services are a Branch of their Worship, or both are performed alike: They fly more swiftly than if they flew on the Wings of the Wind. Their Spirits are always in Tune and Frame, never unstrung and out of Order; and they need no Means of Preparation, as we do, to bring our Hearts to a right Temper: They are never clogg'd or encumbered with Aversations, Indispositions, Deadness and Indifferency, *Psal. ciii. 20. They hearken to the Voice of his Word*

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to execute, and perform it most promptly and readily. They lose no Time or Seasons of Devotion; but stand with their Loyns girt, and ready to execute all commanded Performances, to bear a part in the heavenly Work and Services. With what Alacrity and Chearfulness do they perform and discharge all that is required of them! Oh happy and blessed State of Soul, which is no where to be met with but in Heaven! This is a Lesson of Instruction to us on Earth to learn to do the Work of God with Chearfulness and Expedition; do his Will here below as it is done by Angels and Saints in Heaven, *Matt. vi. 10.* Oh blessed and powerful Examples to cure us of our Averstions, Sloth and Dulness, in Matters divine and sacred! which should be a great Argument of Lamentation to us: And when we attain to a Freedom and Willingness in holy Things, yet it is but feeble, wanting in Degree, and of short Continuance; our Wheels are no sooner oyl'd, but they slacken and abate quickly in their Motions: It is much ado to keep in the Fire (when once kindled) upon the Altar of our Hearts.

[6. T]HE heavenly Worship and Services are always answer'd with Tokens and Marks of Acceptation and Favour: They are highly grateful to the ever-blessed Object, to whom they are tendred. Was God pleased to call the Sacrifices of old a sweet Savour? How much more may we account the Services of the Blessed above to be so? When our Duties below bear some Unsuitableness to God's Commands, yet he gives them his Acceptance; but in the Worship of Heaven they carry Commensurateness to the Rule, and never fail or come short of pleasing him: All are perform'd so, as to answer and agree

agree with the Will of God, and the Ends of Worship are attain'd by them, and therefore full Returns are made unto them. God answer'd their Prayers of old, and gave them Tokens of his Favour by Fire from Heaven, and in the *Holy of Holies* in another Manner; and why may there not be something Above analagous thereunto? Something like it in the celestial Responses; tho' by more immediate Emanations of his glorious Beams and Manifestations; some Discoveries made to them in the Face of God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Who would not then be one of these blessed Worshippers, that lives in a perfect Pleasing and Doing the Will of God, and what is ever acceptable to him; and in the reviving Smiles and Favours he answers their Services withal?

17. It will be an eternal and everlasting Service. Till the Beginning of Time, the Creation of Things, God lived without the Service of his Creatures, had none to celebrate his Perfections, and he stood in no need or want of any. He is an infinite Fulness, and all-sufficient to himself, and his glorious Name is exalted above all Blessings and Praises, *Neh. ix. 9.* But seeing it was his Pleasure to create glorious and excellent Beings to praise and glorify him, he will continue them in his Service, and make them happy for ever in the eternal Fruition of himself. To these he will unfold himself; display his Glories to them; put a Stamp of Eternity upon them; and employ them in his Work thro' all the Ages of Eternity, and make them the Objects of his glorious Grace, rich Love, and unparalleld Goodness for ever. And as they shall be indefectible and above Decays; so their Work and Services shall always be fresh, vigorous and un-

undecaying, yea, and upon the Encrease and Advancement.

THE Psalmist tells us, *Psa. cx. 10.* that *his Praise endures for ever.* And we are sure that the same Reasons, on which they were at first founded and begun, and have been continued hitherto, will hold good, and be a just Ground for the everlasting Perpetuation of them. The Subject-Matter of their Services will be inexhaustible, and the Saints will want no Strength and Ability for the Performance of them.

THESE are honourable and glorious Properties of the Worship and Services of Heaven; and there are probably many others besides, which lye above our Conceptions, and that we are in the dark about.

3. THE Work and Worship of Heaven will constitute a celestial Sabbath. In Heaven there is an eternal Sabbathism, a Sabbathism of eternal Rest and Blessedness, celebrated. This is that which departed Saints are commenc'd and entred upon, and is that Rest and Sabbath that remains for all holy, heaven-preparing Ones, *Heb. iv. 9.* *There remains therefore a Rest to the People of God.* A Sabbath is for holy Rest, not a Time of Idleness, but to be religiously employ'd. So this glorious, eternal Rest, that is prepared for and promised to Believers, is not pass'd over in Ease and Idleness, but in Acts of Worship and Adoration. It is a Rest from Toy and Labour, but not from Work and Service. On the Sabbath-Day the Sacrifices were doubled; the Priest had more to do on that Day than on any other: So in our everlasting Sabbath we shall serve God after a more perfect Manner than now we do. On the Sabbath a special Delight and Rejoycing in God was to be exercis'd, *Isa. lviii. 13, 14.*

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If thou call the Sabbath a Delight, the Holy of the Lord honourable, then shalt thou delight thy self in the Lord. So in our eternal Rest we shall delight ourselves in his Presence. Oh blessed and perfect Sabbath! This is that endless and everlasting One that will have no Weariness, no Interruptions or Cessations in the happy Work of it, and that will be fill'd with Employments and Exercises of the highest Kind.

THIS is a sweet and delightful Conception of Heaven, especially to those that groan under and experience what the Labours, Toils, Sufferings and Afflictions of this present State are: No Conception of Heaven could be more appropriate, pleasing and refreshing to us than this.

4. THE Worship that the Saints perform to God in Heaven gives them, and brings them under the honourable Denomination and Character of Kings and Priests. They come under the Title of Priests in this Life, being consecrated and set apart to the Lord to offer up holy Services and Sacrifices; but it is withal extensive to, and to be understood of their State and Condition in Heaven, where they will be such in the highest Sense, have an absolute and perfect Consecration; and we shall find several Scriptures carrying this Meaning in them, 1 Pet. ii. 9. *But ye are a chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar People.* So are all Believers more eminently a chosen Seed of Christ by his Spirit, a dignified Kingdom of Priests, who are designed to reign with Christ. The like to this we have, Rev. i. 6. *And has made us Kings and Priests to God and his Father.* This Text is to be understood of the Worship perform'd to God in his immediate Presence in Heaven: Their ministring, not before the Throne of

of Grace only, but before the Throne of Glory, above in the heavenly Temple. Every Saint in Heaven, in the Services he performs there, is a far more excellent and glorious Priest than *Aaron*, or any of that Line ever were, when array'd and clad in all the priestly Robes, and ministring in the highest Services of the Tabernacle or Temple. The Sacrifices and Incense these glorious Priests offer up in Heaven, *viz.* those of Praise and Thanksgivings, together with their Hearts and Persons, is far beyond all that the *Jewish* Priests had to present and offer under the Law. Their's above is a Priesthood glorious and everlasting, which the legal Ones could not pretend to, for *they were not suffer'd to continue by reason of Death*, Heb. vii. 23. And in this a Christian will be conform'd to Christ, who has an everlasting Priesthood, Ver. 28. *For the Law makes Men High-Priests which have Infirmitie; but the Word of the Oath, which was since the Law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore; and who is, Chap. v. 6. call'd a Priest for ever, after the Order of Melchizedeck.* But this is not all the Honour that will be put upon the Saints in Glory: They are not only Priests, but Kings, as in the foremention'd Text, *Made us Kings and Priests unto God.* And Chap. v. 10. *And has made us unto our God Kings and Priests, and we shall reign on the Earth.* Tho' these Texts point at some Dignity and Honour the Saints may have bestow'd on them in this Life, yet, questionless, they look as far as the heavenly State, the Condition they will be advanc'd to hereafter. Never were there such Societies and Assemblies of Worshippers on Earth, as there are in Heaven. The Assemblies in the Temple were mix'd of Priests and People; but those above will be con-

stituted wholly of the former ; yea, and which is more, will be Kings also ; all Kings, and all Priests. How glorious a Sight will the Beholding them be ! How ravishing, how transcendent ! So great are the celestial Dignities, Honours and Advancements. It was a grateful Sight to behold the Ministrations of the Priests in the Temple ; but this will be far surpassing all that can be imagin'd. In short, certainly then the Worship that is perform'd by them will be of a very excellent Nature ; and, to crown all, they will have the Honour of approaching and being admitted very near to God.

5. We may observe the great Privileges of bearing a Part in, and being Spectators of the Transactions and Performances of Heaven : To behold, hear, and take part in this blessed Work. This whole Affair, in all the Parts and Branches of it, will be the Object of their spiritual Senses, Sight, Hearing, &c. Tho' the Worship of Heaven be perform'd by Spirits, yet they will be seen, be the Objects of Sight to one another. True, a Spirit is invisible to us in the present State ; but it will not be so in the Life to come, when they are endu'd with another Manner of Sight, have visive Powers of a different Nature, and of another Manner of Contexture from what we have here ; Organs finer, and much more acute, and every Way suited to that glorious State. We may assuredly conclude that glorified Spirits are visible to each other, and consequently that the Societies and Assemblies of them are so. Sight is one of the principal Senses spoken of as peculiar and belonging to Heaven, and the Happiness of that World is commonly represented to us by it. *Matth. v. 8. Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God.* *1 John iii. 2.*

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We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. Now if the spiritual Sense of the Blessed be exalted and refined to that Degree, as to be said to see the ever-blessed God; much more may we suppose the Saints will be qualified for beholding one another, and all the ravishing Transactions and Occurrences of Heaven.

AND here, by the Way, I would observe, that it seems rational to conceive that a Spirit is a Substance of some Extention and Amplitude, and not an indivisible and mathematical Point; and consequently that Extention is not so peculiar and limited to a Body, as some would represent it to be: But be that as it will, yet the Visibility of Spirits in Heaven must be maintain'd and adher'd to.

BUT to return, how charming an Entertainment will the Transactions, Services and Managements of Heaven be to the Enjoyers and Beholders of them, and to the joyst Actors and Agents with them in those blessed Works and Employments!

6. THE Bodies of the Saints will bear their Part, and be joyst Sharers and Assistants with their Souls hereafter, in all heavenly Services. As they have undergone a Part with them in religious Work on Earth, so they will do, in what shall be perform'd above; and for this very End, together with others, will they be rais'd out of their Graves, and be dignified with so many excellent Capacities, as those of Spirituality, Agility, &c. to make them correspondent and suitable to their Souls, that they may be Companions, and accompany them in divine Offices; and by being thus qualified, they will be no Clog nor Hindrance in heavenly Work, but an Help and

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Furtherance in it, and both together will be more worthy and honourable, than the Soul alone was. How then should those Bodies be valu'd, sanctifi'd and kept pure, that are appointed to such glorious Uses? What Need to possess these Vessels at present in Sanctification and Honour?

THIS will be the last and finishing Stroke that will be given to the perfecting of the Saints, and the compleat qualifying them for the heavenly Performances. We know of nothing further, than this to be wrought upon them. This is the Work that is reserv'd to be accomplish'd upon them, at the general and final Judgment.

207. We may remark the Transitions that there will be in the Work and Worship of the Blessed above, their passing from one Service to another, as we do here below; from Supplication suppose to Praise and Thanksgivings, from Prayer to hearing the Word, and the like. So we may be assur'd it is in some Proportion and Similitude with them in Glory; and that because there is a Variety of Worship there, they have many Strings to touch upon, and there must necessarily be many new Scenes, and Turns in their Performances, even as *the Church on Earth has its new Songs, Rev. v. 9.* And xiv. 3. So may we say of them, their Worship is constant and never ceasing, but the Matter of it is variable and mutable, yea, they have far greater Varieties of Subjects than we have. Thus the Angel *Gabriel* tells us, *Luk. i. 19. I am Gabriel that standeth in the Presence of God, and am sent to speak unto thee and shew thee these glad Tydings.* We here find him exercis'd in various Offices, sometimes waiting upon the celestial Throne, and at other Times employ'd in

in Offices and Executions of God's Will and Pleasure abroad in the World. Thus a new Song was sung by the Angels at the Incarnation of our blessed Saviour; *Luke ii. 13.* *And suddenly there was with the Angel a Multitude of the heavenly Host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, &c.* And so we may think that as some cease, so Occasions do occur for the forming others in their Stead.

To conclude the whole. We may by this imperfect Account make some slender Guesses what the Worship of Heaven is; the Temple being so glorious a one, and the Worshippers being such as these, we may suppose their Performances will be agreeable and suitable thereunto. But could we represent this as it is really manag'd by them, give a Draught of it in its full Extent, then it would create Amazement and Wonder, and be a surprizing Subject to us. So that we may cry out in the Words of *Job xxvi. 14.* *How little a Portion is at present known of it.* But a good Use may be made of our Ignorance of it, and Unacquaintedness, or to little Acquaintance with it, *viz.* to make us long and thirstafter the fuller Manifestation of it, to see the Performance of it, and be joint Actors with them, to bear a Part therein.

WHAT we have said, may be very aptly back'd with the following Case. How must we conceive of Christ's Intercession with Respect to the Worship of Heaven, or will there be a Need of his Intercession with Respect thereunto? Will it cease or be continu'd upon the compleating the Church triumphant?

To which we may answer as follows. That some Branches of Christ's Intercession will cease with the Change of the State and Condition of Believers, and of the Church militant, com-

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mencing triumphant. There will then be no Need of his Intercession for Audience and Acceptance, as when they were here below, and compass'd with Sins and Infirmities; their Reception to Heaven imports the full Acceptance of them. All their Doubts and Fears how the Heart of God stood towards them, are vanish'd, they could not come into his Presence here below, but thro' the Intercession of Christ, yea, and are receiv'd to Heaven thro' the Virtue of his Death; but having had full Admission and Reception thither, that Part of it falls and expires, and there is no further Use for it. But they need the Prevalency and Virtue of his Sacrifice and Merit to continue them in their celestial Stations. Their Right to their Possession and Fruition of Blessedness stands and will do so forever upon these two Pillars, the Mercy and free Grace of God, and the Merits of the Redeemer. Christ will have an everlasting Priesthood in Heaven, and the Virtue of his Death will never cease, and as the Saints will own it was through these, that they were brought thither; so they will ascribe the Continuance thereof to the same glorious Causes, and they shall bear and carry them in their Remembrance for ever; And these shall be the Grounds of their eternal Praises and acknowledgments, even in and to the remotest Periods of Eternity, they will be singing the Song of their glorious Redeemer, Advocate and Intercessor, by Virtue of whose Death and Mediation they were admitted to the Throne of Grace on Earth, and thro' which they were at last received to Glory. They'll cast their Crowns at his Feet, and as they were possess'd of all, in and thro' him, so will they make all ready and

and due Returns to him. Thus it is in Heaven at present, and will be for ever, for *he is the same Yesterday, to Day and for ever, Heb. xiii. 8.* Tho' he has finish'd all, as a Mediator of Acquisition, yet he do's and will continue a Mediator of Fruition. He will at last deliver up the mediatorial Kingdom to the Father. *1 Cor. xv. 24. Then cometh the End, when he shall have deliver'd up the Kingdom to God, even the Father.* But the Fruit and Virtue of his Undertakings, and what he has done for us, will never be obliterated, but be kept in everlasting Remembrance; no Ages or Durations will null or antiquate the happy Relations Christ and his Redeemed stand in to one another; for they cannot but bear in Mind, what they owe to his Undertakings. Our blessed Lord will exhibit and manifest himself in his mediatorial Glory, as God-Man, in such amazing Ways and Methods, as will keep all afresh in their Minds forever. None of the Wonders of glorious Grace and Mercy express'd in the Salvation of Souls, are lost by their going to Heaven, but every Thing is imprinted more deeply upon them, and those Subjects that seem'd little in this World, are discern'd there, in great Magnitude and Dimension. How much more is a Saviour to the Saints in Heaven, than he is in the present State!

THE fourth and last General is to shew that the celestial Work and Worship may be consider'd and look'd upon, as a Pattern of Worship to the Church on Earth.

THE immediate and special Pattern of Worship, is the Nature and Perfection of the ever-blessed God. *John iv. 24. God is a Spirit and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in Truth.* And the Scriptures, its

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Commands and Promises are the declar'd Rule of it, as we have before obser'd, but questionless, as we may make Heaven our Pattern and Imitation in other Things; set before us those perfect Copies and Transcripts of the divine Mind and Image, so we may do the same in Matters of Worship. And this seems to be comprehended in that Petition of our blessed Saviour's, *Math. vi. 10. Thy Will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven.* But this Matter may receive Light from the following Considerations.

1. THE Church on Earth, and the divine Transactions about it, are a Glass of Instruction to the Glorified above; to learn something from, and behold and see more of God in them. *Eph. iii. 10. To the Intent that now, unto the Principalities and Powers in heavenly Places, might be known by the Church, the manifold Wisdom of God.* If they did not gather Knowledge of the Mystery of Redemption, by the Ministry of the Apostles preaching it to the World, yet by their Contemplation of what was done in the Church, and of the Goodness of God to it, they saw as in a Glass that manifold Wisdom of God, which before they saw not, or did not so fully understand. A Parallel to which Scripture is that, *1 Pet. i. 12. Unto whom it was reveal'd, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the Things which are now reported unto you, by them that have preach'd the Gospel unto you, with the holy Ghost sent down from Heaven; which Things the Angels desire to look into.* The Word imports to us, the narrow Search which the Angels use, in Order to the finding out, and becoming acquainted with the Mysteries of Salvation; it is an Allusion to the Cherubims, whose Faces bow'd down to the Ark, as desirous to see the Mysteries contain'd in it. Now if this be so, surely the blessed above may be conceived

ceiv'd as a Mirror, and Volume, from which the Church on Earth may be instructed, learn something of Duty from them, and make them their Example. Do they condescend and look down to us for their Information? and shall not we ascend to them, to look upon, and be made wiser from them? There's no World for Instruction like to Heaven, nor no better Patterns than those of Angels and Saints to be set before us.

2. THE Church triumphant, and Church militant, are under one and the same common Rule of Worship. Their Model of Worship is seen, and made manifest in God, and is written upon their Minds; but it is for Substance the same with ours, only theirs is calculated for a higher and perfect State, and for Beings perfected, but ours for imperfect ones; their State requires Perfection in their Performances, but ours Sincerity; but were we capable of more, even Perfection would be due from us: They have some Parts of Worship we have not, and we have some they have not, but in others they and we agree.

THE Church in Heaven, and that on Earth are one. We may allude to *Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6*, *They are one Body and one Spirit, have one Lord, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all.* And does not all this bespeak a Unity and much of Sameness in Worship, and so near a Relation to them, justify an Imitation of them?

3. THE Worship of the Church militant is form'd and deliver'd to us in Terms and Expressions taken from that of Heaven. *Rev. iv. 8, 9, 10, 11.* *They rest not Day and Night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come; and when these Beasts give*

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give Glory, Honour, and Thanks to him that sat on the Throne, the four and twenty Elders fall down before him that sat on the Throne. The Forms of Expression and Gestures of Worship are the same; so great an Agreement and Harmony there is betwixt that of the Blessed and ours. We have the like Expressions again, in Chap. xix. 1, 4. *After these Things, I heard a great Voice of much People in Heaven, saying, Halelujah, Salvation, and Glory, and Honour, and Power unto the Lord our God.* Some observe that the Saints in Heaven, and Christians on Earth are here represented as conjunct and united in the Worship and Praises of the Lord. All this shews that there is, and ought to be a Similitude and Likeness of the Worship of the Church below, to that above, and that we ought to imitate them, and come as near them as we are able. Their Acts of Worship would suit, and be very agreeable to exert in ours, if we could but reach them. A Heart burning with love to God, fill'd with sacred Zeal and Ardours, with such like, is what he looks for from us, and would be acceptable Ingredients, and sweet Perfumes of our Sacrifices and Services.

THIS is a far higher and nobler Pattern, than the best of the Saints on Earth are. To harmonize with, and come near to these, is a Privilege, but it is a far greater Happiness to bear a Resemblance to them above.

4. HEREIN lies Part of the Correspondence and Communion we should maintain and carry on with the Blessed in Heaven. The Church triumphant and militant stand related, and should have a Correspondence with each other. They are both Heirs of the same Inheritance, only the one are at full Age, and Possessors, and the

the other in Nonage and Minority. Now, amongst other Ways of their Communion, this is one, that they come near to one another in Worship; and the more they are imitated by us below, so much the nearer Conjunction we have with them. Our Sin, Unholiness, and unsuitable Performances, create a Distance and Alienation betwixt them and us: But the making them our Patterns, and imitating of them, would encrease our Communion and Acquaintance with them.

More Likeness of Worship to blessed Spirits would be a great Attainment. Those Congregations and Persons are the best that come the nearest to, and worship God in the greatest Similitude to them above; and yet how little are most aspiring towards and aiming at so noble a Mark.

We are apt to be forgetful and unmindful of the Celestial Worship, which we ought certainly to have much in our Remembrance; and whilst we are serving God below, reflect what joynt Worshippers there are above: Myriads about the same blessed Work; and that without any Allays or Stains of Imperfection. Sacred Worship is a special Bond and Cement of Union, it unites Hearts in Love to one another, and is improvable to the same Ends with respect to them in Heaven.

5. Such high and noble Patterns are a great Help to Worship and Devotion. Some of the best and most powerful Arguments for raising and enflaming Souls are drawn from Heaven, and the Manner of their Performances. Who can by Faith and believing Views look up thither, and contemplate their ravishing Exercises and Performances, and not be inspir'd with new Life and

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and Vigour? Such excellent Originals provoke and excite to something of suitable Imitation. This fills the Hearts of Worshippers with an holy Ambition to do the best they can. Now looking upon them, producing such desirable Effects, necessarily concludes it to be our Duty to tread in their Steps, and be Followers of them therein, as far as we can. Such a Method would have prevented many a dead Performance, and enliven'd many a cold Heart. Oh happy Remedy, and cure of a most prevailing Malady! Both Assemblies and Persons may form this into Argument, and reason with themselves to this, or the like Purpose. " Shall we serve God in " so dull a Manner, that have so many Myriads " of excellent Spirits to behold and look upon, " that are doing it with the utmost Liveliness " and Perfection, among whom there is not the " least Unsuitableness or Disagreeableness to the " Work they are exercis'd in."

6. THE nearer we come to, and resemble them in Acts of Devotion; so much the more agreeable is our Worship to God. Their Service above meet with, and find the fullest Acceptation; are most grateful and pleasing to him, (of which we have spoken before;) and by Consequence that that most resembles it, has a proportionable Approbation. Now this is the Crown and End of all Divine Worship, the Glory of it, to meet with Acceptation. God's Acceptance of the Sacrifices of Oid was highly accounted of, and so it should be under the Gospel, and should be sought after by all true Worshippers of him, that it may be well-pleasing to him, and redound to his Glory. And contrarywise, the more that our Performances are dissonant to theirs; so much the less Acceptance

tance must they needs meet with, or are more disagreeable to him.

Now the Consideration hereof is no small Encouragement to look up to those blessed Worshippers, and copy from them according to what our Capacity in that Matter is.

In a Word, Those that must in a little while come to Heaven, and should celebrate an Heaven upon Earth whilst they are here, should surely do all in as great a Conformity, and come as near to it now as it is possible.

There can be no just Foundation for objecting, that the blessed Spirits are a Pattern too perfect and high for us to aim at and copy from, when the ever-blessed God himself is proposed to us as the Object of our Imitation. If we are commanded to be perfect, as he is perfect, *Matth. v. 48.* and *Followers of God, as dear Children,* *Eph. v. 1.* it should not seem strange to us that we may propose the Saints above for our Example; who, tho' they are at present greatly superior to us, yet are our Fellow-Creatures, and stand at a less Distance infinitely from us. And if we must imitate the Saints whilst they are on Earth, surely their State of Perfection renders them more amiable Objects for our Imitation.

To conclude. The Excess and Corruption of the present Subject is that of paying divine Honour to them, as the Church of *Rome* does: But how few Truths are there that are not liable to lie open to the like-Abuse?

Lastly, THE last Head for Consideration is, the Obedience of the blessed Spirits in Heaven.

We have hitherto consider'd them as to their sacred Employments, the Exercise of their Graces, their Worship, Praises and Thanksgivings; and now should treat of their Obedience, and their

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fulfilling the divine Will, the executing God's Commands, and pleasing him in all Things enjoy'd them. True, the Subjects we have hitherto consider'd are reducible hereunto, and are as so many Branches of it; but formally consider'd, it is different, and may be treated of apart and separate from them, and may lead us into some Things that have not yet been touch'd upon.

HEAVEN shines as bright, and casts as great a Lustre upon the Account of the Obedience perform'd in it, as it does in its Worship and other Ministrations. It is the Glory and Perfection of that World, that it is fully obedient to God's Will, and pleases him in all Things. And this is one of the great Differences betwixt that World of glorious Light, and this dark one of ours, one of the Excellencies of it, that his Will is perfectly fulfill'd and done there, so much beyond what it is here below: As on the other Hand, it is one of the great Clouds and Blemishes of the present State that it is so much contested and disobey'd, so little regarded and observ'd by us.

THAT it is thus with them in Heaven, and that Obedience to the divine Will is of the Essence of the celestial State, is evident from the Scriptures. *Psal. ciii. 20, 21. Bless the Lord, ye his Angels that excel in Strength, that do his Commandments, hearkening to the Voice of his Word. Bless the Lord, all ye his Hosts, ye Ministers of his that do his Pleasure.* And our blessed Saviour is most express herein, *Matth. vi. 10. Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.* These Words were spoken by him that had seen how it had been executed there, and how accurately it was fulfill'd by them: He had been an Eye-Witnes

Witness of it, and here gives us an high Character and Encomium of their Obedience, and makes it a Pattern for ours on Earth, in order to make this World happy and like to Heaven. We must look upon these Scriptures as respecting the Obedience of that blessed World in common, and as describing to us the Duty of Saints as well as that of the Angels, and as acquainting us what is executed there as well as what the Angels do in their Ministrations to this lower World, and in their Embassies abroad. We must not think that those blessed Beings in Heaven are *sui Juris*, or above Law and Government: They have many Privileges above Man, yet have no Exemption from Homage and Duty to God. These Courtiers of Heaven then, as we call them, are Servants of God, and Fellow-Servants with us in the same Obedience, tho' theirs is of a more elevated Kind and Nature.

THERE was never one Instance of Disobedience and Rebellion against God and his Will; never any Misperformance of the divine Pleasure in those glorious Regions, but that of the fallen Angels, which met with an amazing and tremendous Punishment. Jude 6. *And the Angels which kept not their first Estate, but left their own Habitation, he has reserved in everlasting Chains, under Darkness, unto the Judgment of the great Day,* 2 Pet. ii. 4. This lets us see the Greatness and Importance of the Duty of Obedience; how exact a one they yield to God, and how dismal the Sin of Disobedience is there.

But in discoursing on this Subject we might consider,

1. THE Signification and Declaration of the Will and Mind of God unto them. They need no Breast-Plate of Judgment, nor *Ephod*, as of Old,

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Old, to enquire and understand his Will, for they have such Notifications and Manifestations of it as are peculiar to, and becoming that blessed State and World of Light: They have the Laws of Heaven, and their Duty, written upon their Hearts; and see in God all that's requir'd of them, and read it in the Customs and Usages of it. Behold not things *through a Glass darkly*, but *Face to Face*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

THE whole Scheme and Matter of Duty and their Obedience lies open and plain before them, and they perform all in the proper and appointed Order: They leave nothing undone that's enjoyn'd them, nor do they any thing amiss and imperfectly that they undertake; but all is executed according to the celestial Platform and Model, and so as corresponds fully with the Will of God, and that is exactly pleasing to him: But we shall entrench upon the next Particular.

2. WE may observe the Manner of the Execution and Performance of the divine Pleasure: The Consideration of the Nature of their Obedience: Which, by Enquiry into, we shall find most compleat, and wanting none of the Requisites it should be furnish'd withal. Adam's Obedience in his innocent State was perfect; but theirs in Heaven is as much superior to it, as their Condition and the World they are in exceeds that he was put into and stood in. And here,

[1. WE may note the great Authority of God and his Laws upon them. They own him as their dread Sovereign, and his uncontestible Right to command them, and give him the Honour and Glory that is his due, and belongs to him, as their supreme Lawgiver; highly reverence his Name, that is inscrib'd and stamp'd upon his Commands, and by virtue thereof embrace them, and

and readily practise the Duties contain'd in them; and are free from those Sights and Contempts of them as which are chargeable withal.

[2. THEY have the highest Approbation of the divine Will, his Pleasure and his Commands. What the Psalmist says of the Laws of God, *Psal. cxix. 28.* that he *esteem'd all Things concerning all his Precepts to be right*; the same do they judge of the Laws of Heaven: They are most agreeable to their excellent Natures, and suitable to that happy State they are in: They are of a higher Nature than those of ours, being calculated for the Meridian of Heaven; and their Happiness lies in the Observation and Performance of them. When the Nature of Persons and the Laws they are under do harmonize and comport together, (as it is with them in Glory) it makes Obedience to them sweet and pleasant: But where it is otherways it is irksome; as, alas! it is on Earth.

On the high Estimation they have of God's Laws! The great Veneration they have them in! Happy Precedents for us below, where they are accounted so meanly of.

3. THEY make no Resistance against, have no Reluctance or Opposition to God's Commands, nor have any Impediments of that or any other Kind to their Obedience: They are free from all Dispositions to Disobedience: They have no Weariness in the Performance of them, *Gal. vi. 9.* are *not weary in well-doing*, and do not hesitate and dispute the Matter of their Obedience. They have none of these, nor any other Maladies in Heaven; no backward, unwilling Services, as we have on Earth. Such as these are not compatible to the heavenly State. True, they had such once, as well as others; but they

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drop'd from them, with other of their Infirmities, as *Elijah's* Mantle did from him.

4. THEIR Obedience has all excellent Properties and commendable Qualities, is free from all irregular Lines, and has those that render it beautiful and amiable; so that it agrees in all Things with that World where it is perform'd. Many might be mention'd: We shall only touch upon a few:

[1.] THEIR Duty and Work above springs and is perform'd from right Principles, flows from pure Fountains that have no debasing Mixtures in them: Their Faculties and Powers are sanctified and perfected to the highest Degree, and fitted to send forth the sweetest Streams of Devotion. None of the Instruments of Musick are out of Tune in Heaven.

[2.] They perform and execute all with Alacrity and Delight: It is a Part of their Heaven, one half of it, to do the Will of God. It was thus with our Lord Redeemer, *Psal. xl. 8.* *I delight to do thy Will, O God.* And all that he has brought to Glory are possess'd with the same Spirit. The Pleasure and Satisfaction they meet with in heavenly Work, and fulfilling the Will of God, is unconceivable and unutterable.

[3.] THEY obey God's Commands with Readiness and suitable Measures and Degrees of Affection; *Luke i. 19. I am Gabriel, that stand in the Presence of God.* They have a marvellous Promptitude and Disposition thereunto: They are cured and deliver'd from all the Backwardness that once clog'd their Powers, and that beset and encompas'd them in this Life. The Affections and Graces of the Saints in Heaven do eminently adapt them for all the Work and Offices they are call'd out unto, and are requir'd of

of them. Oh how their Hearts burn within them to do the Will of God! The Fire on their Altars never goes out, nor needs renewing, as ours does.

[4. THEIR Obedience is most accurate and exact: The Commands of Heaven are fulfill'd in every Jot or Tittle of them. When we keep some of God's Laws, it may be, we transgres others; but it is not so above.

[5. THEIR Performance of the divine Will is compounded of all excellent Mixtures and Ingredients, of the Graces of the holy Spirit; is perfumed with Love, sweetned with all grateful Odours. An inward Subjection, that of the Heart, accompanies their external Performances. It is not an incompleat, dismember'd Obedience; but has all the Parts, and wants nothing that is requir'd in it: Nothing is more common with us than to offer God a lame and imperfect Service, the Carcass and Outside, without the Vitals of it.

[6. IT is directed to the highest and most worthy Ends, and most fully attains them, *That God in all Things may be magnified and glorified,* 1 Pet. iv. 11. The fulfilling of God's Will is a special Means of honouring him on Earth; and much more is it so in Heaven, where he is perfectly obey'd and serv'd. The glorifying God is the great Center and Point, that what they do is referable unto. Obedience to the Will of God is an owning our Subjection to him; his Sovereignty, Greatness, Excellencies and Perfections. In short, their Obedience has all the Properties that ours should have, and all other superadded Requisites that are needful to give it a Becomingness to that State, and make it meet for divine Acceptance: Which brings us to the

5. THE Obedience and Duty of the Saints in Heaven has God's Favour and Acceptation, is well-pleasing to him. This is the honourable Character he puts upon our keeping his Commandments in this Life, *1 John* iii. 22. —*Because we keep his Commandments, and do those Things that are pleasing in his Sight.* *Col. i. 10. Walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing.* This was the Work of our Blessed Saviour on Earth, *John* viii. 29. *I do always the Things that please him.* And this is the great Busines of all his Followers, and especially theirs in Heaven. Doing thus brings us into a State of Acceptation with God, which is the Happiness of Believers here, as to the Beginning of it, and of the Blessed in Heaven in the greater Degrees and fuller Manifestations of it to them there: But of this Privilege we have spoken already, and therefore shall wave the further Enlargement upon it.

THESE are some of the lesser Beauties and Excellencies of their Obedience, some Shadows of it; but as it is perform'd by them, it is far beyond our Description of it. How glorious does it appear as managed and transacted by them! It is one of the ravishing Sights of Heaven, surely, to behold them in the Execution of it! To see such Myriads employ'd in the happy Work of pleasing and doing the Will of the ever-blessed God, and all united and concordant therein; striving, as it were, with an holy Emulation, which should outdo one another. All which shews us the Reason of that Petition our Lord has put into our Mouths, *Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.*





C H A P. VI.

Under which we shall reduce the preceding Subjects and Truths to Practice. Some Misconceptions of Heaven are rectified. What Influence such an Account of Heaven as the foregoing one should have upon us. The Consideration of the Hindrances that lie in the Way to Heaven. A Proposal of that World tender'd to Sinners, under several Arguments. Professors argued with, and excited to secure this Happiness. Several Distinctions and Characters of Persons with respect to Heaven. Cautionary Directions to Believers about it. Lastly, A more positive Use of Exhortation, with several Counsels and Advice, as Preparatives to this Blessedness.

¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ E may now look back with Shame and
W Humiliation upon the preceding
Scheme and Account of the Celestial
World, the Worship, Ordinances,
Services, Employments, Praises and Obedience

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of it. How poorly do we conceive and speak of Matters that are so sublime and above us. We have Reason to fear, lest we should bring up an evil Report of that excellent Country. What God charges *Eliphaz* and his two Friends with, that they had not spoken of him the Thing that was right, *Job* xlii. 7. he might justly say of us in the present Case, that we have not spoken of this blessed World the Things that are right, misrepresented it, and debas'd the Glory and Excellency of it; had we given a more genuine Draught, a fuller and more lively Narrative, a better Map of it, it may be, would have prevail'd upon some, to have become Seekers of it. Alas, that we can help your Conceptions of these great and important Things no more, that are so necessary to be known, and that all should become acquainted with!

THE Things that relate to the World we are speaking of, are not Matters of Speculation and empty Notions, but to be put in Practice by us. Truths and Points that have Relation to a Life to come, to an everlasting State of Happiness, should sink into our Hearts, enflame our Affections, quicken us to Action, and put us upon Attempts and Endeavours to make a Conquest of it, make us more intent and vehement in the Pursuit of it, and to take Heed we be not like the *Jews* of old, in depriving ourselves of the heavenly *Canaan*, through Unbelief, spiritual Sloth, Negligence, and Sins of that Sort.

AND here we should endeavour to free our Minds of some false Apprehensions and Misconceptions we have lain under and possess'd ourselves of, relating to Heaven, such as these following.

I. All narrow, unworthy Conceptions of Heaven, such as lessen and detract from the Glory of it. That it is only one spacious Apartment of the superior Regions, and that blessed Spirits stand round and encompass the Throne of the divine Majesty, and are but one Community and Assembly. Now these low Conceptions of it, may have taken their Rise from a Misinterpretation of some Scriptures. As for Instance, that in *Rev. v. 11. And I heard the Voice of many Angels round about the Throne, and the Number of them was ten Thousand Times ten Thousand, and Thousands of Thousands.* Many are ready to take this and such like Texts to contain an adequate Notion of Heaven, whereas they give us but a Shadow or some faint Resemblance of it; for these Expressions are an Allusion to the Courts of earthly Princes, and the Postures of their Ministers in their Attendance upon them. But surely we must make an Allowance for the vast Difference and Disproportion there is betwixt earthly Courts and Palaces and the celestial One. But it is the Narrowness and Darkness of our Minds together with the Superiority of heavenly Things to us, that leads us to Misconceptions of that State; but such unworthy Apprehensions as these, our blessed Lord has sufficiently overthrown in that Scripture, *John xiv. 2. In my Father's House are many Mansions;* And we in our Explication of it.

We have some low Allusions of Heaven; sometimes it is held forth to us by eating Bread in it, lying in *Abraham's Bosom*, and such like; but we must put a Sense upon them that is agreeable and suitable to that World they are expressive and Illustrations of. We are apt to fall too low in our Conceptions of Heaven, but sel-
dom

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dom (or rather never) err on the other Hand, in too high and exalted Apprehensions of it. We cannot extend and stretch our Minds to the Vastness and Amplitude of the heavenly Regions, nor to the Numerousness and Infiniteness of its Inhabitants.

2. THAT the Employment and Work of the Saints in Heaven, consists in Vision and Contemplation; that they have nothing to do but to behold the divine Majesty and Glory and dwell upon the Contemplation of it; including withall the Glory of the Place. It is granted, these are very great Branches of the Work of that World. The Blessedness of Heaven, is oft represented to us by seeing and beholding God. *Math. xviii. 10. Their Angels do always behold the Face of my Father which is in Heaven.* *John xvii. 24. I will, that those whom thou hast given me, be with me, to behold my Glory which thou hast given me.* And the same we may say of Contemplation, which is the working of the Mind upon God, and a Meditation of him; and this is certainly a great Part of the heavenly Work and Felicity. But these are not the whole of their Business, there is much more than this, that they are exercis'd about; nay, it is impossible there should be nothing but these, for these are leading to many other Duties, because they will put such Life, kindle such Flames in them, as will set all their Powers a moving and working, and excite and stir them up to great Varieties of Action.

AND the Exercise of these in this Life, is a Proof of this. Sight frequently draws out the Heart and raises Affections in us, agreeable to the Object we look upon. And Contemplation has the like Effect and Influence, is a special Means of kindling a Fire within us, how much

much then will a Vision and Contemplation of celestial Objects above do it? It cannot be imagin'd how great the Power and Virtue of these will be in Heaven, where we shall have a full View of them, and these Duties will be continu'd and extended, as they will be above.

3. THAT the Work of the Blessed there, consists in Praises and Thanksgivings to God; that they have no Variety of Services, nothing to do but to sing the Praises of the Lord. *Rev. iv. 8. And they rest not Day and Night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty.* This has obtain'd and prevail'd amongst many, that by Reason and Consideration might have recover'd themselves from this Mistake. The Work of Heaven, it is granted, is summ'd up in this, and this is their Work in the gross, or the Chief, but not the Whole of it. But we have said enough about the Work of that World, in the preceding Part of this Discourse to rescue us from this Error, so need no further enlarge upon it.

HEAVEN is a Place of Rest in the highest Sense and to be receiv'd and taken thither, is an Entrance into Rest, *Heb. iv. 11.* But then the Godly begin the most excellent Work and Labour, the most glorious Services that possibly can be, and more abundant than ever they engag'd in, in this Life, but this is not toilsome to them, but their Felicity. The Rest of Heaven consists in sacred Action.

4. THAT Grace does not grow in Heaven, and that they are so perfect at their coming thither, that they are not capable of making Improvements, whereas it is a World of Advantages above all others; they have Room and Scope for more Knowledge, and their Graces

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ces are continually fed and supplied with new Oyl and Matter, to feed and encrease the Flame and make it more vigorous.

O H that we could learn to think and conceive more truly, suitably and honourably of this blessed World, and live more answerably to it, that we may bring a good Report upon it !

THE next Subject for our Consideration, is to enquire what an Influence such an Account of Heaven, as the foregoing one, (the Nature, Work and Activity of that World) should have upon us.

ACCORDING to what the Description of a Country is, Persons are affected towards it; if the Draught of it be excellent, if it have many Rarities and Excellencies, a good Situation, be fruitful, pleasant and charming, according thereto are they in Love with it, discourse of it, and long to see and enjoy it. Even so it is, and should be in the present Case. All these conspire, and are found in this blessed Country, together with other Excellencies that are infinite and innumerable. What shall all these then produce in us? Should they not warm our Hearts towards it, and make us say, as Moses concerning Canaan? *Let us go over and see that good Land, that happy Country*, Deut. iii. 25. Or get up to the Top of some *Pisgah*, where we may take a Prospect of it; this should surely fill us with Wishes and Desires about it, and make us long to be acquainted with their Ministrations, Services, Performances and Attendances, to see and hear what their Worship and Praises are. This is that State and World that excells all others, the Flower of all Lands, where there is such Work and Inhabitants, as are not to be found any where else. But

1. It shews what the primitive Nature of Man is, and wherein the Perfection of our Beings and Faculties consist. We see from this present World wherein our Degeneracy lies, but if we would understand what we are, as restor'd and perfected, we must look up to Heaven and consider what the Condition of the Blessed above is. That is the World of Perfected Spirits, *Heb.* xii. 23. And their Perfection consists in the Purity of their Natures, the Amplitude of their Powers, their Disposition and Readiness to the Execution of their Duty, their Activity in the Performance of it, and in glorifying and pleasing God in all they do, and being without ceasing exercis'd therein. Why such a State as this we should aspire after, and aim at, copy after them, and near unto them; the Grace of God begins this Work in the Souls of Believers here, gives them an Excitation, and raises them up first to lesser, and then to greater Degrees of Activity, heavenly Motions and Exercises, till it carries them up to a State of Perfection, that Pitch and Height they above are arrived at, and advanced unto.

2. It should make Heaven a very desirable World to us, and the great Object of our Prosecution and Attainment: As the Spouse said of Christ, after a particular Description of him that he was *altogether lovely*, *Cant.* v. 16. the very same we may say of Heaven, that it is in all Points and Respects a lovely World. It is such a Place, has such Inhabitants and such Employments, as there is no Parallel to. The Creation has many desirable Orbs and Regions in it, many Paradises, but none comparable to this of the third Heavens, *2 Cor.* xii. 2, 4. With what Motions and Ardours of Soul, with what holy

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holy Vehemency should this be sought after ! This is the glorious Prize we should all run for, the immortal Crown we should seek to obtain : No hopeful Means nor appointed Methods for the Attainment of it should be left unattempted by us. We should say, What ! lose my Hopes, my Part, and Share, in such Work, in such Company, and deprive my self of such a Happiness as there is to be enjoy'd in Heaven !

LET us then, in order to the making it ours, terminate and fix our Eyes and Hearts upon it. Other Objects may be look'd upon with transient Views ; but we should dwell upon this only. Others may be beheld indirectly ; but this directly, and fully, and be chosen by us for our Residence and Place of Happiness. We should say of Heaven, *This shall be my Rest for ever : There will I dwell, for I have desired it*, *Psal. cxxxii. 14.* This is the Place where I would take up mine everlasting Abode. I have run round the Globe to seek a Happiness, but can find none but this. I would give up my Interest in all other Lands for the Sake and Enjoyment of this blessed Country.

3. THAT we get an Acquaintance with Heaven, and the Veils broke and rent that screen and obscure it from us. We should make all possible Discoveries of this excellent Country. As the *Israelites* sent their Spies before them to *Canaan*, to get the Knowledge of it ; the like should we do as to Heaven : Look into those Glasses ; consult the best Maps and Accounts given of it, and that represent it to us ; taste the Sweetness of that promised Land ; make frequent Visits to it ; and remove out of the Way the Clouds and Obscurities of Sense, Ignorance and Unbelief, with other Things of a like Nature,

ture, that hide it from us. Surely such a Place as Heaven is, such Employments as are there makes it greatly worthy of our Acquaintance.

A N Acquaintance with Heaven is angelical Knowledge, a Knowledge of the highest and noblest Kind. Here lie the richest Treasures that we should search for, the Mines and Veins of Glory that we should dig for. How prejudicial is an Ignorance and Unacquaintedness with these great and necessary Things, and how beneficial the contrary!

C A S T your Eyes then beyond this sublunary World, beyond its encircling Orbs, and there you will find and discover it; the Glory, Brightness and ravishing Melodies of it, will open to you, be seen and discover'd by you, and this will bring us under the powerful Influence of it.

4. T H E foregoing Account of Heaven should make us highly esteem and love that Work, and those Duties that are so much practised there. As the Apostle gives the Preheminence to Grace, upon Account of the Continuance and Abidingness of it, *1 Cor. xiii. 13.* So upon the same Grounds we should put an Estimate on the Duties of Godliness. We may be assured, that that is Work indeed that will abide for ever, that will never be antiquated, or cease to be performed. It may be difficult to tell what Work and Duties there will be a Cessation of in Heaven, that we are exercised in here below. All moral Duties, all Acts of Godliness, consistent with and suitable to that State, will be perpetuated, as we have before observed: Nothing will cease, but what would be improper and useless. It is sure that Love and Delight in God, and rejoicing in him, Admirations of him, Praises and Thanksgivings

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givings to him, with all proper Means and Ways of Glorifying him, (with more, that we cannot yet apprehend) will be exercis'd in Heaven: And should not this recommend and endear these Duties to us? Make us more in love and more taken up with them in this our State of Preparation? May not a Believer solace himself with such Meditations as these (when he is in the Exercise of them)? "This is Work that I shall be taken up with in Heaven for ever: "Death itself will not put a Period to it. When "I shall cease to be in this World, I shall not "leave off loving, praising and glorifying God; "but do it more, in a higher Manner, and bet- "ter hereafter, than I do it here: And there- "fore this Work and these Duties I will endear "and inure myself to, employ myself, and be "more exercis'd in now, because they will be "the Work of Heaven, and what I shall be ever- "lastingly and incessantly employ'd in there."

THE Musick and sweet Songs of Temple-Worship are long since ceas'd: But those of Heaven, the celestial Temple, will never expire and become old; but abide and stand upon Pillars of Reason and Necessity that are eternal.

5. WE should improve this Account of Heaven to all excellent Purposes and Advantages of Religion and Piety. Heaven is the World and Place whence we should fetch holy Fire to animate and inspirit us for all the Duties of Godli- ness; to cure us of our spiritual Sloth and Deadness, and quicken and excite us to holy Diligence in sacred Matters. How should it warm our Hearts to consider that there are so many engaged in the like Work; such Myriads and infinite Numbers of holy, wise and perfected Spirits employ'd in the same Duties and Offices that

that we are. The Godly on Earth are the lesser Number; but taken or reckon'd in Conjunction with them above, they greatly out-ballance them. What a Consideration is this to strengthen us in the Practice of Godliness, and encourage us hereunto? What! so many serving the same God, and shall we be ashamed to espouse so excellent a Cause, having such worthy and happy Precedents? Will not looking upon them bring new Life and Vigour, Zeal and Affection, into our Souls? Our blessed Saviour tells us, *Matth. xi. 19.* that *Wisdom is justified of her Children.* And surely much more is it so by all the great Witnesses of Heaven, that are, without ceasing, bearing a glorious Testimony to Godliness by their incessant Exercises in the highest and noblest Performances of it.

AFTER this Manner we should fetch Instructions and Arguments from Heaven for performing the Duties of Godliness; kindle our Lamps at theirs, and bear in Remembrance the Work of the Blessed above, that we may manage ours in more Agreeableness to the Excellency and Dignity of it.

To sum up all: Of such Force, Power and Weight, yea and greater than so, should the Work and Employments of the Blessed in Heaven be unto us; and we should act under the Sense and compulsive Virtue of them. But what just Matter of Grief and Lamentation should it be, that they make so little Impression upon us, and so many are Strangers to them, as if they were Things of no Significancy and Concernment, nor of any Use and Advantage to us?

THE Subject that falls next under our Consideration is, to enquire into the Hinderances that

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that lie in the Way to Heaven: What some of the Means of Exclusion are, that will bar us the Fruition of it, and deprive us of bearing a Part in its glorious Work and Services?

This is a very frightful and astonishing Point, yet attested by manifold Evidences and Witnesses. Our Lord Redeemer has preach'd it to the World, *Luke xiii. 24. Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.* And a Cry of damned Souls comes from Hell into our Ears to verify it: Those that were Seekers of it, yet are many of them fallen short, and miscarried in the Attempt. The Way thither is *freight and narrow*, and there are many Rocks and Dangers in it, and more Shipwrecks to be seen in this Road than in any other; and we have many forewarning Cautions, Admonitions and Exhortations, to prevent a Miscarriage herein. All should fear lest they *come short of it*, *Heb. iv. 1.* It is a hard Matter to get to Heaven; and a Point that will not be gain'd without a great deal of Care and Pains, Difficulty and Diligence.

Now the Hinderances in the Way thither, may be reduced to two Sorts:

1. THOSE that are consistent with the winning and obtaining Heaven at last. There is no Way thither, but thro' Oppositions and Hinderances: None ever came there, but they met with such in that Road. The Devil will let none go thither, but he will exercise them with Molestations and Disturbances. These then you must expect, reckon up, and be prepared for.

2. THOSE that are prevalent and finally exclusive, and shut the Door of the blessed Kingdom upon us. The first are to be watch'd against, contended with, and broke through; but those are most fatal, and greatly to be dreaded, that

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prevent our Entrance into Blessedness. Of this latter Kind it is that we are to treat: And amongst the we may reckon the following ones.

1. A Disparity, Unsuitableness, and Contrariety of Nature and Disposition to Heaven, and the sacred Work of it. We were created at first with a Congruity and Suitableness thereunto; but our degenerate and corrupt Nature stands in Opposition to it, and is expressly barr'd Heaven, whilst it continues in that State: As such we are under a Deprivation and Loss of the divine Image, and have contracted a contrary one, and are involv'd in a dismal Pollution and Defilement of our Powers, and are unfit for an heavenly State. Upon which Account it is that our Saviour informs us, *John* iii. 3. *That except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.* Agreeable hereunto is that the Apostle tells us, *Eph. v. 5.* that *no unclean Thing has any Inheritance in the Kingdom of God.* There must be an Harmony wrought in the Souls of Persons to God himself, to the Place and its Inhabitants, before there can be an Admission into that World. None but such shall ever bear a Part in the celestial Songs and Praises, nor joyn in Confort with blessed Spirits in their happy Work.

2. All Sins, but some above others, are especially influential to the obstructing and barring our Entrance into Heaven. Sin, in the Nature of it, has a malignant Effect, a Tendency this Way; but yet we may say, that it is not Sin barely as such, but Sin as continued in, as prevalent and predominant in Persons, and as unrepented of, that is formally and actually exclusive

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clusive of Happiness. And we may add, that there are some Sins that have a more direct Tendency than others to exclude us out of Heaven; of which we have several Catalogues in the Scriptures, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. and Rev. xxii. 15. Whereunto we might subjoyn an Enumeration of other Sins; as Unbelief, the Love of the World, Hypocrisy, Contempt and Undervaluation of Heaven, &c. But this Matter will appear more evident, by considering the Parallel that there is betwixt the temporal and celestial Canaan, as to an Exclusion from, or an Admittance into them; the Former being, in this Respect, a Type of the Latter. The Apostle argues this Case particularly with the Jews in the Third Chapter to the Hebrews. And we find that their Provocations, Hardness of Heart, their Murmuring and Tempting the Lord, but especially their Unbelief, kept them from entering into the good Land. Verse 18, 19. *And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his Rest, but to them that believed not?* And in the next Verse you have his Inference from the Whole; *So we see they could not enter in because of Unbelief.* This was the Sin that he lays the great Stress upon as a Ground of their Exclusion out of Canaan: And is not this the fatal Sin that keeps Persons out of Heaven, the celestial Canaan? We might here enlarge in shewing upon what Account it is that this Sin has such a great Influence herein.

EVERY Sin that we commit is a Weight and Clog upon us in the Way to Heaven, Heb. xiii. 1. and unsuits us for the Service of that Country. But some are of the Nature of Fetters, that wholly stop us in our Motions thither, or turn us aside into a contrary Path.

3. A Deficiency in Endeavours, Strivings, and Diligence about Heaven, want of christian Industry and Labours, with the Sins contrary thereunto. Many Kingdoms are won by Conquest, and lost thro' the want thereof; and the very same it is as to Heaven. There is an holy Violence requir'd to be offer'd unto it, in order to the obtaining it, *Math. xi. 12. And from the Days of John the Baptist, until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence, and the Violent take it by Force.* Our blessed Lord has acquainted us with one of the common Ways of falling short of Heaven, *Luke xiii. 14. Strive to enter in at the strait Gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.* The Word in the Original signifies a Labouring against Opposition; and with the utmost Endeavour of Mind and Body, as Wrestlers and Combatants use to do. It is not cold Prayers and drowsy Wishes that will serve in this Case; Heaven is gotten by Force, and surpriz'd by Onset and Storm. 'Tis not so slight and easy a Thing to get thither as the World imagines: The Way to it cannot be made broader than Christ has fix'd and chalk'd it out to us. This is what the Apostle cautions the believing Jews to take care of, *Heb. vi. 12. That they be not slothful, but Followers of them who thro' Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.* What Numbers may be found set down short of Heaven thro' want of holy Industry and Diligence, Negligence and Sloth, and are now uttering grievous Complaints thereof! We may form Conceptions of them in this Manner: "Had it not been for these Sins, I "had sat upon those Thrones, been invested in "those Glories that others now are, and been "exercis'd in those great and high Employments

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“that they are engaged in: Some further Degrees of holy Contentions would have made me as happy as they now are; but all’s forfeited thro’ the Want thereof.”

On the dangerous and sad Effects of Remissness, Coldness, Triflingness, and the Want of holy Vigours of Soul in the Concernments of Heaven and our Salvation! What Invectives should be drawn up and form’d against them? And what Warnings given to avoid them?

4. MANY think Heaven will be obtain’d upon less and lower Terms than indeed it will be. The Conditions of Happiness are clearly stated in the Scriptures, and yet we are so bold as to be making new ones of our own devising, and think that God will condescend thereunto, and deal with us according to them. Not a few presume upon the Mercy and Grace of God, and think that he’ll falsify and recede from his Word, and the settled Rules of Salvation and Happiness. Now what is this but making the Way to Heaven and Salvation wider than God has made it? And so, by an Error in Judgment, we run into an Error in Practice, and dash ourselves in pieces upon our own Mistakes.

5. FALSE Pleas and Titles to Heaven, sandy Hopes and Expectations of eternal Happiness, Presumption and Self-Confidence, are dangerous Rocks, and many have split themselves upon them. Not a few mistake common Works and Changes for those that are saving, and common Gifts and Graces for special ones, and urge and plead false and wrong Arguments in behalf of their Acceptance and Salvation. This is what our Saviour frequently exposes and overthrows. *Matth. vii. 22. Many will say to me in that Day, Have we not prophesied in thy Name? And in thy Name*

Name cast out Devils? To which he answers in ver. 23. *And then I will profess to them I never knew you, depart from me ye that work Iniquity.* With which he crushes all such Pretensions in a Moment. There were none had greater Expectations in the Matters of their Salvation than the Scribes and Pharisees, and yet Christ tells us, Matth. v. 20. that *unless our Righteousness exceed theirs, we shall in no Case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* What is more common, alas! than for the spiritual Building and Fabrick of many to be overthrown, when the Winds and Storms beat upon it! Matth. vii. 26, 27. Gospel Evidences, right Titles of Happiness, never fail; but none else will stand or hold good, but end in Frustration and Disappointment. Oh fearful Thing! to be broken in Matters of such Moment, such weighty Cases! *The great approaching Day will try every one's Work of what Sort it is,* I Cor. iii. 13. And a Distinction will be made, and a Separation pass betwixt the pure Metal and the Counterfeit, and then all our Mistakes will be broken to Pieces. What is the Cry of many at last, but 'Alas! ' my Hopes of Heaven prove vain and are ended 'in Disappointment. Oh that I had built upon 'more sure Foundations! I rested myself upon 'these Arguments, judg'd them to be sufficient, 'and thereupon made no further Progress, sought 'after nothing further to qualify me for Hap- 'piness and these proving ineffectual, I must fit 'down short of it for ever.

6. WANT of Qualifications and Preparations for Heaven. Many Changes must be made upon Persons, several Requisites are necessary to the making them Heirs of Blessedness. As Persons are train'd up for Courts and Posts of Honour,

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in like Manner are Believers form'd for that Country. 2 Cor. v. 5. *Now he that hath wrought us for the self same Thing is God.* This is effected by the Polishings and Formations of the Grace and Spirit of God upon them. And this is the Reason why some are admitted and receiv'd in to the Wedding, while others are excluded, Math. xxv. and hence it is in ver. 10. *And they that were ready went in with him to the Marriage.* Holy prepar'd Souls are let in, when the unsanctify'd and unprepar'd cannot get Admittance. Now these Preparations are either compleat or incompleat, sound or Defective, some have them in the former, and some in the latter Sense, a Part, some Branches of them, not the Whole; and this was the Case of the rich Man in Luke xviii: He told Christ, *he had from his Youth kept the Commandments*, ver. 21. but Christ lets him understand that there was a Defect, something more to be done before he could be saved, v. 22. *Yet lackest thou one Thing.* He was got a good Way towards it, and had exceeded many, but there was one essential Want behind, and that was, that he did not prefer and value Heaven before Earth, did not set more by it than all other Things. Now what was his, is the Case of many Professors in all Ages; they acquire and get some of the more easy Qualifications for Heaven, but never attain or come up to the saving compleat Preparations for it; and by thinking they have a Sufficiency, rest there and seek no further, and thereby are excluded, and so fall short and lose the glorious Reward of Blessedness.

WHAT Need then to look to our Attainments, and take Care that nothing be wanting in us, that will be an Introduction to Heaven, and that

that we break through this Hindrance together with others that lye in our Way thither?

7. **N O N P E R S E V E R A N C E**, Discontinuance, and breaking off our Endeavours, not making Progresses and Improvements in the heavenly Course and Work, not being faithful and diligent unto Death in Order to the obtaining a Crown of Life. The Condition of Happiness lies in a Continuance in well-doing. *Rom. ii. 7. To them who by patient Continuance in well-doing, seek for Glory, Honour, and Immortality, eternal Life.* It is they that endure to the End shall be saved, *Matth. xxiv. 21.* and not those that intermit and break off their Course, before they have got to the End of their Race. A Christian should always be growing and improving, still pressing nearer and nearer towards the Mark, going on from Strength to Strength; There is no Nimirum in Holiness, you cannot have too much Holiness, or too much of the Love of God, nor of the Fear of God, or Faith in him. Many have begun well, and hopefully, and bid fair for Heaven at first setting out, but for Want of Persistance, by breaking off their Enterprize, never arriv'd at the blessed Haven. Like the *Galatians*, chap. v. 7. that run well but soon broke off. Where are many of the Candidates and Beginners in Godliness, the promising Buds and Hopes of Piety, whose Profession was but as a short Blaze, and turn'd aside from the Ways of Religion? Are they not fallen short of the Gates of Blessedness? And by not running to the Goal lost the glorious Prize set before them, and must never bear a Part in the Work and Services of the celestial Temple?

THESE are these, with other Hindrances that endanger and threaten our Enterance into this happy Land of Promise, all which we should endeavour to surmount and break through ; nay, we should take Occasion from them to animate ourselves against them, become more zealous from the Impediments and Oppositions that beset us in our Way thither ; yea, they should raise holy Resolutions in us, after greater and more nobler Pursuits, and they should be the Matter of our Fear and Dread. How careful are they that are running for a Prize, to avoid every retarding Thing.

BUT we may reduce and contract all that we have said to these two Sorts of Hindrances.

1. INTERNAL ones, those that rise from within, and spring from our own Corruptions.

2. EXTERNAL ones, that assault us from without. These are like two Seas or Rivers, that by meeting together, become more violent and tempestuous. The first are nearer us and more powerful than the other, and the Force and Efficacy of the latter commonly arises from 'em. For what would the Mounts that Satan raises against us, worldly Allurements and other of his Temptations signify, if they did not derive their Virtue from within ? yea, we commonly find them acting with Combination and Conjunction with one another ; such a strong Confederacy there is rais'd against us, to stop our Progress in this happy Way : But both these should be watch'd against, even the gathering of these Clouds without, should be resisted and withstood, and our Hearts kept with great Observance, that the Edge and Power of them may be blunted, and the Force of them so broken by Recourse had to effectual Succours, that they

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may not divert, or make us slacken our Course and Motion Heavenwards.

THE preceding Subject leads us on to our next Purpose, viz. to propose, tender, and hold out to you this glorious World, and its ravishing vices, and present it to you as that that is highly worthy of your Preference, Choice, Acceptance, and diligent Prosecution; and that we may draw your Hearts and Minds and Endeavours towards it, let me subjoin the following Considerations.

1. LET it be observ'd how we have sought and pursu'd after vain and delusory Happiness, and shall we be negligent about the true and real one? Have we hunted after the Shadows of Happiness, and shall we slight substantial ones? Does not this bring us under the Censure of the Prophet? *Isa. iv. 2. Wherefore do ye spend your Money for that which is not Bread, and your Labour for that which satisfieth not?* Do we court a sensual Happiness, and do nothing towards the obtaining a spiritual one? Follow after low and debasing ones, and not those that are sublime and agreeable to us? Do we say, *Who will shew us any Good?* *Psa. iv. 6.* And shall we not enquire and seek out for the best and supreme Good? Do we exercise ourselves about those that are perishing, and overlook those that are eternal? Oh how preposterous and absurd is this, and a gross Abuse of that noble Principle and Inclination towards Happiness, that we have yet some Remnants of left within us? And yet how many are there that are lost to this Degree? Surely then it is needful to rectify these Mistakes, and turn our Eyes upon the blessed Objects of Happiness that are now presented unto us.

2. CONSIDER how Heaven and Blessedness are presented in continu'd, and renew'd Tenders

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ders and Proposals to us. Our Lord Redeemer was the first that ever in Form preach'd and made Owners of this Kingdom to the World, (tho' the Gospel was preach'd from the Beginning to it,) and he has sent his Ministers ever since to renew the Suit and Tender of it, and seconded one Solicitation after another, to gain us to the Acceptation of it. And shall this have no Force and Cogency upon us to induce us to the Embrace of it? Can we hear what a Kingdom, what an undefil'd incorruptible Glory and Happiness Heaven is, and can we refuse it, reject such rich Tenders and such powerful Solicitations? The great God will pass by and overlook all the Contempts we have cast upon his Heaven that we have been guilty of, and yet bestow it upon us, if we will at last accept it. He has waited long upon us, and held out these glorious Things a great while to us, but he will soon withdraw them, if we do not presently comply; he will not withdraw his Tenders upon every Denial, but continu'd and final ones will make him cease his Offers for ever, and swear that we shall have no Share in, nor *enter into his Rest, Psal. xcv. 11.* And will not this prevail with us to become Seekers of this Happiness.

3. We might argue with you the Want and Need of a Happiness, and that you must have one some where, or you are miserable for ever. And where can we find or meet with one, if we deprive and shut ourselves out of this? Can we find another Heaven and Kingdom, unless it be one that lies in our Imagination and Fancy? There is but one only real permanent Felicity, God will not multiply Happinesses for us, has but provided one Happiness in common for all that he will make happy. And therefore, is not this

this a cogent Argument to make us fall in with the Offers of Heaven, and set upon the Securement of it? The Devil will promise us a Happiness, tells his Servants they shall be happy in serving him, but this is the Deceit of the Father of Lies.

4. CONSIDER the incomparable Excellency and Worth of Heaven and its Happiness. All that know how to set a just Value on Things, make the highest Account of it, all that are wise and good esteem it, and none but Fools contemn and slight it. It is most excellent in a twofold Respect, absolutely, and comparatively, these are two Ways of finding out the Goodness of Things.

1. IT is so absolutely consider'd in itself. If ever there was a Prize worthy to be run for, a Crown that deserv'd to be contended for, surely it is Heaven; to strive for this is the most glorious Combat, and to obtain it the most happy Victory. In the present Consideration, it is all over excellent, Heaven is Pearl and refined Gold, without any Allay. It is the Choice of all God's Workmanship, the Master-Piece of all, the Pavilion of the great King, beautified with the most noble Inhabitants, and where the chiefest and highest Works and Exercises are performed.

2. IT is so, if we consider it comparatively; if we weigh it against the very best of Things, those that commonly pass for the greatest Excellencies, as earthly Crowns and Dignities, worldly Honours and Greatness of all Sorts. These, if ballanc'd with Heaven, are as nothing, and all their Glory vanishes and disappears before it; the solar and starry Orbs are bright Things, yet nothing, if compar'd with the Heaven

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ven of Heavens. If we ballance Feathers and Mountains, compare the Light of a Candle with that of the Sun, yet there would not be so great a Disproportion betwixt them, as there is betwixt Heaven and the best of Sublunary Things, if compar'd together; and shall such an Argument as this have no Prevalency upon us? Shall we not most highly estimate and seek to ensure such precious Things? What can we call it but Madness, to slight and lose such a Happiness, a Happiness created on Purpose for humane Nature, *prepar'd from the Foundation of the World?* Matth. xxv. 34. Shall we be contented to forfeit such a Prize as this?

5. CONSIDER the Issues and Consequences of obtaining and losing this Happiness; the Gain and Loss thereof are of such Extent, that our Minds are under an Incapacity fully to conceive and apprehend them. The gaining of Heaven and everlasting Glory, comprehends all that can be acquir'd and wish'd for, leaves out nothing that is needful to be enjoy'd, and there is nothing can ballance the Loss of it, which is greater than all besides that can befall us. Oh the infinite Gains and Advantages that accompany the getting an Interest in it! And the Loss is on the other Hand equal thereunto, absolutely irreparable, and that can never be made up by any Thing whatever. This is evident to every believing Mind, that will but take a View of the State of the Saints in Glory, and the Condition of the Damned in Hell. Were blessed Spirits that are now possess'd of that Happiness, to be sent back into the World for another Life of Trial, they'd be more zealous than ever in the Pursuit of it; and were the Damned to have another Offer of it, if their utmost

utmost Pains and Diligence would obtain it, they would not lose it: The one may say, We have got all in obtaining Heaven; and the Damned say, We have lost all in falling short of it.

AND now let's draw these Arguments together, and lay the Force of them before us. Is not here great Reason to awaken us about this great Point, the looking after and securing this Happiness; and cure us of our Indifferency and Carelessness about it? Should we not say, Oh! my Soul, what hast thou done in being mindless and forgetful of a Matter that's so concerning to thee? Surely it's needful that thou secure a Part in this glorious Kingdom, by exerting thy self in another Manner about it. Is there none then that will offer themselves to become earnest Candidates and Seekers of it; that will turn their Triflings and Neglects into serious Diligence for the Obtainment of it?

BUT the Neglecters of this Blessedness, and those that are in Danger to fall short of it, should be distinguish'd. There are some that we may call Dreamers, and manifest Triflers about it. These we have been dealing with under the last Considerations. But there are, besides them, others that are using some plausible Endeavours hereabouts, but yet with great Remissness and Negligence; and who, without they encrease in Diligence, are never like to attain it. These we should also see if we can provoke and quicken, by forewarning them of the Dangers they are under of miscarrrying in this great Affair. There's a great deal of Self-Delusion and Mistake hereabouts, and this is what we would use all possible Means to prevent. Alas! that any that seem to have a Love

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to Heaven, an Approbation of Godliness, and are, as they think, fair for the Enjoyment of it; that any of these should finally come short and lose it at last, and all that they have done prove in vain and to no purpose. Surely there's great need to make an Attempt upon such, to see if we can bring them to a better Management: And we may do it by the following Arguments.

1. MANY of this Sort of Professors have fallen short of Heaven. Of this Number we may reckon the foolish Virgins; and the Church has many such in it in all Ages: They go far, and do a great deal in Religion, and yet fall short of the Prize, and never enter; want, do not do that, that will give them the Possession of Heaven. Now should not others Shipwrecks be a Warning, and of the Nature of a quickening Caution and Admonition to us? How seasonable does this make that of the Apostle John to us, 2d Epist. viii. *Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full Reward;* q. d. Take heed, lest you grow remiss or negligent in the Course of your Obedience, and so lose the Reward of what you have done already.

2. S U C H as these, those that we are dealing with, own the Worth and Excellency of Heaven, and therefore should be answerably diligent about the Attainment of it. This is an acknowledged Principle with those we are dealing with at present, and consequently there is so much more expected from such. The more valuable a Reward is, the more we should bestir ourselves about it. It is Matters of Self-Condemnation to own the Excellency of a Happiness, and yet be lazy in the Prosecution of it. As to the Objects before us, we can never outbid 'em, or do too much to the

the obtaining 'em. Heaven will be cheap enough to us, if we part with our All to the Obtainment of it: And shall we fall short of, and lose such a glorious Prize?

3. Do you think you are not greatly wanting in holy Zeal, Diligence and Activity, for gaining such a glorious Prize, defective in the Means and Conditions requir'd to the making it yours, and gaining a Title to it? Do not our Consciences condemn us on this Account? Do not our Lives and Duties give Witness to it? Our Non-Improvements in Grace and Holiness demonstrate it, with many other things of like Nature: And is not all this a convincing Argument that more is needful, and requir'd of us? Let's compare the Excellency of it with our Endeavours, and we shall easily discern a great Disproportion in 'em to it. We must needs grant and own it's highly worthy of much more. What does a glorious Rest deserve at our Hands? Oh that I could provoke you to a more becoming Diligence!

4. CONSIDER how sad it will be to fall short and be deprived of Heaven, after great Expectations of it; to have our Hopes and Probabilities about it broken; to lose all our Pains, and see all that we have done come to nothing. Who can imagine what this will amount unto? What a Surprize was it to them in *Mattb. vii. 23.* to be answer'd, that he never knew 'em, and to be bid to depart from him; and to the foolish Virgins, to hear Christ tell 'em he did not know 'em, *Chap. xxv. 12.* This cannot well be conceiv'd by us at present. Now is it not yet in our Power to prevent so sad a Case? to avoid such a Rock as this? And shall we not therefore do it? Should not all be made sure in Matters of such Importance?

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BEWARE your Expectations about Matters of such high Importance be not like those of the Ungodly, of whom Solomon tells us, *Prov. vii. 11.* that *when he dies, his Expectations shall perish*; not only his worldly, but his heavenly Hopes, which is worst of all: And shall we by our Negligence involve ourselves in the like Calamity, and be Partakers with 'em in their Lot? *Eccl. viii. 10.* has
5. WILL it not be far better; should you not much rather chuse to be found amongst the List of sincere and successful Seekers, than contrary ones? Amongst the wise, than foolish Virgins? Sound Christians, than Hypocrites? Number'd with those that will be own'd, accepted and taken in, than the rejected and excluded ones? And therefore it concerns us to get the Marks, and act the Part of sincere Believers now; something that will distinguish us from Hypocrites and unsound Professors at the last.

IN short, Heaven is the great Mark and End of a true Believer: All that we do in the Profession of Godliness looks and tends that Way: He that attains and reaches this, manages happily, and to excellent Purposes; but those that fall short hereof, lose their Labours, and all they do proves vain, and becomes ineffectual.

OH that we could impress these Points in the warmest Manner upon our Hearts, and enflame the Zeal and Diligence of Christians about this glorious Enterprize! Call upon 'em to run this christian Race with more Swiftnes, and inspire 'em with greater Anxiousness and Concern hereabouts. How should the Contenders for such a Prize be affected? Let us then shake off Sloth, and betake ourselves to a prevailing Activity, to win and obtain the Glory set before us, such a one as will be attended with a Certainty of Success.

cess, and accompanied with an happy Issue. Let this weighty Matter have our greatest Cares laid out and spent about it. Herein we can never exceed or overdo; but are, on the other Hand, rather in danger of falling short.

But that we may yet make a further Discovery of ourselves as to our Hopes and Expectations of obtaining Heaven; find out whether we have any Grounds for them, yea or no; whether they be solid, or vain and imaginary only, we shall lay down the following Particulars; reduce and distinguish all Men under a threefold Division: By which we may be able to make a Judgment of ourselves as to the Matter in Hand.

Some carry Qualities and Characters contrary to Heaven upon them. Those that are exclusive and shut out of the Kingdom, Marks of Deprivation, as we may stile them. It's pity we should find such upon any. But that it is so, cannot be denied. The Scriptures gives us several Lists of this Sort. *1 Cor. vi. 9. 10.*

Know ye not that the Unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Idolators, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, shall inherit the Kingdom of God. *Eph. v. 5.* *For this ye know, that no Whoremonger nor unclean Person, nor covetous Man, who is an Idolater, hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.*

Rev. xxii. 15. *For without are Dogs, and Sorcerers, and Whoremongers, and Murderers.* All that have these and such like Characters upon them, are expressly excluded and barr'd all Hopes of Heaven, can in no wise enter into it. On their Part they would not have a Heaven, and it will have nothing to do with them. Now let the Reader consider whether he has any of these dismal Lines upon him.

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1. THERE are another Sort that want, have
none of the Badges and Characters of Heaven
upon them, tho' they have not the black Lines
before mention'd, are free from them, yet there
is no heavenly ones to be seen on them, no Foot-
steps of a new Nature of holy Dispositions,
of the Spirit of the Children of God, none of
the Graces of the holy Spirit working in them;
they have no supernal Motions towards Heaven,
and the future State of Happiness is not at all
in their Thoughts, one may find the Charac-
ters of this, but not the least Shadow of the
other World upon them, nothing that they do
looks that Ways, but contrary wise. Oh how
empty are they of all Things of that Kind! How
is there not many with whom it is thus? And
are not such without all Hopes of eternal Sal-
vation, may not we assuredly pronounce them
to have no Part nor Lot in these glorious Privi-
leges? *Acts viii. 21.* nothing on which to found
or build a Claim upon to them, whilst it is thus
with them.

2. THOSE that have the Characters and
Badges of that heavenly World upon them, whose
Souls are as we may say a Counter-Part
of Heaven, Line upon Line upon them, cor-
responding with, and answering those above;
the Holiness of Heaven answer'd by the Ho-
liness upon their Hearts, and the Rays and
Beams of that Country appearing in lesser De-
grees in them whilst they are below. As Chil-
dren resemble the Parents or the Regions they
were born in, even so it is with gracious Persons, in
like Manner do they carry a Similitude to Hea-
ven, and their Father that is in Heaven; not
that all have these in the same Measure, but
some in greater, others in lesser Degrees, but
there

there is none of God's Children, without some of them upon them. Now of the three Sorts foremention'd, there is none but the last that can make any hopeful Claim to Heaven; others may bear up themselves with false Titles, but none but these can prove one to it. So that our first Work in Order hereunto, if we would be a Kin to Heaven, is to get the Similitude of it, the divine Nature engraven upon us, and this would shew us to be the Heirs of it. And let it be observ'd, that wherever these Characters are found, they are always accompanied with proportionable Endeavours for the Acquisition of Heaven, for they are always in Conjunction with it, and carry forth the Soul in Aspirations, Desires and holy Diligence, for securing and making it theirs; but those that want these Badges, are destitute of the Springs of heavenly Actions, want the great Helps to quicken them herein.

LET us then look to ourselves and see what we can find of these sacred Characters upon us, assuredly they that carry heavenly Badges upon them, have an Earnest of it. God will not disown or cast away his own Image, that that he has made like unto himself. If there be any of this upon us, it yields us Grounds of Hopes that we shall come thither in Time, and partake of those glorious Enjoyments. How should us then seek and thirst after this Privilege, and labour to have it drawn upon us!

AND this leads us to deal in the last Place with this Sort of Persons, those that have something of these Characters upon them. That have chosen Heaven for their Country and Home, and that we may say on the other Hand are chosen by God to be Partakers of that Ble

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Sedness, have some Beginnings of it already in them. We should say much to you, by Way of Exhortation, Council, Advice, Encouragement, Comfort.

AND Oh what Room and Scope there is to day, Abundance to you! While you are on this Side Heaven, you need all possible Helps to forward you in the Progress to it, tho' you are brought thus far towards it, yet the Warfare is not finish'd, but many Dangers are on all Hands in your Way, you have not yet laid hold on the Prize, nor conquer'd, and to use Moses's Words to the Jews, *Deut. xii. 9. Ye are not as yet come to the Rest, and to the Inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you*; so that many Things are requisite on your Part to bring you safe to the everlasting Rest. And Oh that I could give you that Advice and those Counsels that might be especially conducive thereto! And

1. LET me speak to you by Way of Caution and Prevention. There are several Things you should beware of.

1. TAKE Heed of dishonouring and bringing an Evil Report upon Heaven. It is the unquestionable Duty of Christians to honour this blessed Country and cause it to be well spoken of, to silence the Wicked, and allure others to the Admiration of it, by representing it in its Brightness and Excellency. The World judges of Heaven by the visible Arguments of the Behaviours of Professors, and indeed their Lives and Conversations reflects Honour or Contempt upon it, if they walk worthy of it, their Consciences suggest to them that it is an excellent World, but if they live unsuitably they are ready to judge sleightly of it, and by this

this Means they bring up an evil Report upon it, as the Spies did of *Canaan*, *Numb.* xiii. 3² this gives them Occasion to say, Is this the Heaven they talk so much of? Is this the Reward they boast so much of? Surely, was it such a Place as they represent it to be, they'd love it better, pursue it more fervently, do more for, and live at a higher Rate to obtain it. The ungodly World matters not for Heaven, yet they observe what the Behaviours of Professors are towards it. And alas, are there not many Arguments of this Kind put into their Hands! So that it concerns us to avoid such Occasions and give an honourable Representation of it to the World, that we may force them to acknowledge that it is an excellent Country, and certainly we are under the highest Obligations to restore and maintain the Worth and Glory of it.

[2. T]HAT we keep up heavenly Minds, a Relish and Saviour of heavenly Things, and take Heed of losing it; this is one of the Characters of an Heir of Heaven, and therefore should not be parted with. *They are born not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man but of God*, born from above, *John* i. xiii. and therefore have a Nature holy and divine by spiritual Life, Light and Love enclin'd to do the Will of God, and desire Things holy and heavenly, and therefore this Tincture should be always maintain'd and not lost. *As a fleshly Mind Savours the Things of the Flesh, Rom. viii. 5.* so should the Spirits of Believers savour Things spiritual. Of all Objects and Matters whatsoever, heavenly ones are the most preferable, worthy and sweetest; now upon the Turn of the Mind the Sense and Taste of these Things are lost, and

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they become insipid to it. As there is a great Advantage in a rightly qualified Temper, so there is a great Damage in the contrary one, Rom. viii. 6. besides, it is highly unsuitable and disagreeable for the Children of God, those that carry a Relation to Heaven, to have their Minds otherways dispos'd, and to feed upon and relish Things that are earthly, sensual and fleshly.

[3] THAT we beware we do not weaken, cloud, and darken our Hopes, our Right and Title to Heaven; but maintain it in its Clearness. There is great Care taken that we do not prejudice our Title to earthly Inheritances, and should there not be the like, yea greater us'd for the Preservation of our Right to the glorious Inheritance of the Saints in Light? A comfortable Title to Heaven, good Hopes through Grace is a great Privilege, and administers much Comfort to Believers; to keep all clear betwixt us and Heaven, is a Point of Duty, and great Wisdom, and valuable upon several Accounts; but to bring ourselves under Fears and Doubts about our eternal State, to break in upon our Hopes, lose the Sense of God's Love, incur his Frowns, and blot our Evidences for Heaven, is very prejudicial to us. Oh how tender and careful should we be about Matters of this Consequence! No, we should be so far from this that we should make all more sure us, relating to our future Happiness.

[4] WE should take Heed of, shun an unmindfulness and forgetfulness of Heaven, losing the View and Sight of that blessed Country. It is the Character of a godly Person, to have his Heart and Mind fill'd with Heaven, exercis'd about, and taken up with it. What Objects

jects are there comparable herewith to be the Furniture of our Minds? No Treasure like to this; but then to have the Heart void and empty hereof, is very unbecoming the Expectants of it; it is the special Use of our Faculties to be employ'd hereabouts. Our Powers of Cogitation, Memory, &c. are given us for this End, and we lose the spiritual and religious Use of them in a great Measure, when we do not exercise them in this Manner. The State and Frame of the Mind is never right, when there is no Influence of Heaven upon it. How vain are those Thoughts that have nothing of God and Heaven and of the Life to come upon them? We should account this to be one of the great Maladies of our Souls, and be hasty in our restoring and renewing our Mindfulness and Remembrance of them. The Soul without this, is as a Cabinet without a Treasure, as a Mariner without his compass. In short, an actual Mindfulness of Heaven is not always requir'd of us, but an habitual one is, and that we keep the Tincture of it, even then upon us; and long Vacancies and Forgetfulness of it, are very prejudicial to us.

[5. EXACTING and setting up any Objects Things and Interests in us in Prejudice Heaven. It is great Pity that such worthy and excellent Matters as heavenly ones should have any Rivals or Competitors with them in the Souls of Believers; but yet it is commonly so. How often does the Flesh, the World, or some particular Corruptions jostle with and disturb it in us, and thereby abate our Affections, and cool us towards it? But it is most unworthy to treat it after this Manner, and must needs be very displeasing to God. Surely, surely heavenly Things should be uppermost and chief, and reign alone

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in us, and all others be depress'd to the lowest. Let's then crush all other Interests and Parties, and give Heaven its deserv'd Priority and Precedency, and maintain nothing to the Prejudice and Dishonour of it. Set up then this on high, and it will bring all Things to a sweet and happy Restitude in us.

[6.] WE should beware we do not rest in the Attainments and Improvements we have already made for Heaven. Some never regard, or too little at least, a Growth in Grace, the Encreases of their spiritual Stock and Furniture: They satisfy themselves with some uncertain Hopes of Heaven, and think not of a growing Conformity to it; are not diligent to put off what gives 'em a Dissimilitude to it, and assume and get what will bring 'em to a greater Resemblance thereunto; forgetting that the first Grace that God bestows on 'em is a sacred Talent or Fund given 'em on purpose for Improvement and Augmentation. Heaven is so perfect a State, and the Godly so imperfect, and consequently the Distance and Disproportion so great betwixt it and them, that they should make the greatest Improvements to give them a greater Meetness to it. Did not Truth of Grace and small Measures of it carry Persons to Heaven, had not this, I say, been made the Condition of Happiness, how many would have been shut out? Oh the great Neglect of Accomplishments for that blessed World that many are guilty of?

[7.] UNDUE and disproportionate Hearts and Affections, Operations and Graces, towards and upon Heaven. How are we nonpluss'd and at a Loss, when we consider what it requires and deserves from us, and what disproportional Returns we make to it in Love, Zeal and Affections?

sections? Our Hearts should be all of a Flame towards it, and Grace exercis'd upon it to the highest Degree; and yet, alas! how cool and dull are they: Little like to what they ought to be; nay, much contrary thereunto. Now this we should be caution'd against, be careful to escape it, and endeavour that our Hearts and all our Motions may be more agreeable and correspondent to Heaven.

But besides these, there are many other Things that we should be solicitous and watchful to avoid. The Way to Heaven is like that of dangerous and difficult Roads to Travellers. Oh that we could guide you by, and help you to escape these and all other Rocks, and bring you safe through all thither!

2. We should in the next Place proceed to a positive Use of Exhortation: And here,

[1. Let me call upon and press you to encrease in the Belief, Knowledge and Acquaintance with Heaven; to search into this blessed World, and understand and be better acquainted with it. Unbelief, Ignorance and Estrangeness to it, are the Clouds and Screens that obscure, darken, and hide it from us; but the Contraries bring us into the Light of it. Faith and Knowledge are like *Caleb* and *Joshua*, the two faithful Spies, that discover and give us a true Account of the Celestial *Canaan*; and are as Twins and Assistants in this great and high Office. Faith leads the Way and draws aside the Vail, and looks within, in order to make a Discovery of the blessed Country. Besides which, there are other Helps, as frequent Inspections and Views of it, being much conversant in Heaven, exercising our Minds and Affections upon it, surveying it in its Excellencies, and

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and considering it in its several Branches and Particulars. But what is it of Heaven that we should be acquainted with? Why, we may know more of the Place, the Glory, Brightness, Amplitude, Extent, Variety, and Multitude of the heavenly Mansions. We may suppose the celestial Regions to be more spacious (and what if we should say infinitely so?) than the rest of the Creation besides. What Prince builds a Palace, that does not take up the greatest Part of it for his special Use and Presence? Now how many are ignorant of Heaven in this Respect. Oh that we could get larger and more becoming Apprehensions of it, enlarg'd and rectify'd hereabouts! So we should labour to understand better what God is in Heaven; how he acts and displays himself; what the Openings and Manifestations of his Glory and Perfections are; and the wonderful Effects of his Beams upon blessed Spirits. How excellent and useful would some little Acquaintance herewith be to us: So to labour, to understand what the Lord Redeemer is in Heaven; after what Manner he shines forth to them, both in the Lustre and Glory of his Divinity and Humanity; and what a great Part he bears in, and contributes to the Happiness of that blessed World; and likewise, how the holy Spirit possesses, fills the Saints, and inhabits in them as his sacred Temples. These Things we should be humbly endeavouring, with blessed Angels, *1 Pet. i. 12.* to look into, and be acquainted with: Further, To know something more of the Saints in Heaven, their blessed State, their Life and Performances: The Customs and Services of Heaven, their Attendance, Ministrations and Orders: All which are most ravishing and transcendent, and which we should

should thirst after some Taste of. To which we should subjoyn the Privileges of Heaven, and that the Saints are possess'd of there. It's a Rule of valuing Countries by the Privileges of them; and if so, Heaven claims the Preference infinitely above all others, for they exceed and outgo 'em in Weight and Number. But these, as other Parts of Heaven, are much out of our Reach: We can mention but a few of them: They are introduc'd into, and enjoy the ineffable Light and Glory of the Deity, *1 Tim. vi. 16. Dwelling in the Light, which no Man can approach unto,* i. e. none but glorified Spirits: They have all the Honours and Dignities conferr'd on them that belong to the Heirs of Heaven, are made Attendants about the Throne, and have the Secrets of that World made known unto them, with all other Grants and Privileges that are innumerable. And lastly, We should endeavour to get some Intelligence of their Work, Employments and Services: Of which we have spoken before.

WHAT great Matters are these to be acquainted with, and how worthy to be pursued and sought after? Tho' we can attain but some little of them, yet they should be the Objects of our Desire, Search and Prosecution; tho' we can but see them at a Distance, and are much like those that view a sumptuous Structure without, that admire the external Splendor of it, but are not admitted to look within. Even so 'tis with the Saints at present: Thus do they, as a far off, contemplate the Glories and Excellencies of those blessed Regions. But that little that we can attain unto is worthy of our Enquiries and Search, and should transform and warm our Hearts: And to abide Strangers, and ignorant of what we may get some Knowledge and Acquaintance

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quaintance with, is just Matter of Censure and Condemnation.

AND may we not say to ourselves, " O my Soul, art thou not justly condemnable for thy Estrangedness to Heaven? Mightest thou not have known more of it, if thou had'st been inquisitive and searching? Would it not have discover'd something that would have quicken'd thine Affections, and shewn thee some of the invisible Rarities of that World, that would have set thee a looking farther into them? And shall not this Loss and Neglect be a Call to thee to converse more with heavenly Things for Time to come, and get some further Acquaintance, and make thee more in Love with them? "

[2. I would recommend to you the Practice of that Work they are so much exercis'd in, and taken up with Above; call you to make this much of your Busines on Earth; to do the very same that they are doing in Heaven. By a lively Faith we may see all the heavenly Hosts engaged in the most devout Services, Thanksgivings and Acknowledgments: And shall not we fetch some of that noble Fire from Above, that burns so lively in their sacred Breasts, to kindle some Flames or Sparks of Devotion in our Souls, to set us upon the same Work? Many are possess'd with a Principle of Ambition to imitate their Prince or Superiors; and shall not we be incited from more powerful Arguments to make blessed Spirits our Pattern? Surely that that's the Work of Heaven, is the best and choicest of all other. What Encouragement have we to that, in which we have so many Millions of Precedents inviting us unto? May we not cry out, " Oh blessed World! Shall I not be ambitious to be exercis'd

“*cis’d in the same Manner as ye are? If I might chuse my Work, can I find any comparable hereunto? ’Ere long this will be our Work, as well as yours, (if we belong to that Country) and shall we be Strangers to, and not take up the Practice of it now, inure and accustom ourselves to it?*” They that are to go into a Country, where there are peculiar Usages and Manners, are for exercising themselves in ‘em, that they may be better vers’d in ‘em when they come thither; and the like should the Godly do as to Heaven. Should we not say, “*Shall not that be my darling Work, the sweetest and most delightful of Employments, that they are about? Shall I not be in love with Sabbaths and Ordinances on Earth, seeing I must celebrate and partake of them in Heaven?*”

SET then upon these heavenly Exercises, and spend your Days and Lives much in them, for they must assuredly be your Work for ever. Is there any Work that can lay Claim to your Time, your Strength and Powers, like to this? Let them be then your constant, incessant and unwearied Practice and Business in the Scripture Style and Sense.

3. UNDERSTAND what your more special Duties about Heaven are, and see to the Performance of ‘em, in order to the ensuring and attaining of it. Consult, enquire and find out the Way to Happiness, and pursue it in a Manner suitable thereunto. Oh how copious and extensive is our Duty about it! Heaven is a principal, comprehensive Object, that we should be especially conversant about. The whole Work of our Salvation is compriz’d and abridg’d in our Duty to Heaven: We have greater Business and Concernments depending, and to be manag’d

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about it, than any where besides. They that transact Matters aright towards and with Heaven, are getting forward apace in their Way thicker. Many think they have the least to do there; but that's the Fruit of Ignorance and Unbelief. Oh that I could lay before you the Particulars of your Duty about this blessed World, and how you may arrive there! And here,

1. GET the highest Estimations and Valuations of Heaven: Consider it in its Glories, Worthiness, Excellencies and Beauties. Draw the Scripture Characters and Accounts of it together, and reflect what the Saints have done and undergone for the Sake and Enjoyment of it, and see if this does not encrease the Values and Estimations of it. Heaven is the superlative World. Oh the high Account we should have of it! How much does it outshine all Things whatsoever? None can overrate it. Let all other Things be counted Dung in Comparison of it. Let it excell as much in your Apprehensions as it really deserves to do. Heaven is the Seat and Place of precious Things. There are all Things that are precious. There is the infinitely blessed God, there's a precious Saviour, and a Happiness that's most precious and excellent; and this must needs make it a very excellent World, and justly raise our Estimations and Regards of it. Such Apprehensions of Heaven as these we should have of it, and treat it in all Respects becoming thereunto, and we should reap much Advantage hereby. They that duly estimate it, will be loth to lose such a Prize; but others will cast it away for nought.

2. LOOK upon and consider Heaven both as the Place and Matter of Treasure, where you should Form, lay up and prepare a Treasure

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sure for yourselves; this is according to our Lord's Direction, *Matth. vi. 20. Lay up for yourselves Treasures in Heaven.* Heaven is the Place of Treasures; all the Excellencies, Riches and Quintessence of Things are deposited and laid up there. And there it is that we must seek and lay up a Treasure; by Faith, place and procure a Happiness in Heaven, and on and about that lay out your Care and Love and Labour. All other Places of the Creation are empty of a Happiness. There is no where to lay up a Treasure, but there, nor any to be found elsewhere. There is the inestimable Jewel of Happiness, there is the everblessed God to be enjoy'd in the fullest Manner, with other Concomitants and Adjuncts of Happiness, that are subordinate thereunto. Heaven is a Place of all Christians Hopes, their Joys and Comforts, their God and Christ, and all that they can wish, expect and look for; and there it is that they must lay up all the spiritual Riches that they can acquire and amass together. As Persons carry all Things to their Home, lay up all there, so should Believers do as to Heaven, secure their Interest there, make God and Christ and all theirs, by getting a well-grounded Right and Title to them, lodge their Desires there, and make Heaven the Center of all they do, and say with the Psalmist, lxxiii. 25. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee.* They that have the greatest Interest in Heaven, and have most effectually secured a Part there, have made sure of a Treasure that will not fail them.

We might note the Advantages of such a Practise, and this is what our Lord acquaints us with, *Matth. vi. 21. For where the Treasure is, there will the Heart be also.* This will make us

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live and act above, and dwell by Faith, Love and Delight there.

3. HOLD up and maintain a Communion and Intercourse with Heaven. This is another great Duty we owe to this blessed World; we may be present in Mind and Affection to those Things we are corporally absent from. This is what the Apostle tells us, was his and the primitive Christians Practice, 2 Cor. v. 7. *For we walk by Faith, not by Sight,* and Phil. iii. 20, that their *Conversation was in Heaven.* This Duty is a great Branch of the spiritual Life, and calls for both our Thoughts and Practice. We must hold Communion with the blessed Father, Son and Spirit; with Angels and Saints, in their Work, Privileges and Enjoyments. And it consists in the following Things: In sending up thither in the Exercises of Faith, Desire and Love, with other Graces, and in receiving the heavenly Beams and Influences that flow down and are sent thence; or in acting upon that World, and its Reaction upon us. Thus open is the Passage betwixt Heaven and us, but much of the Intercourse fails on our Part: But if this be broken and interrupted, it concerns us to restore and regain it. How much might be said to enforce and promote this great Duty? Oh that we would consider how precious, and what a Leading and Forerunner the Exercise of it now is, to a perfect and full Communion with Heaven hereafter! Even as an Estrangedness and Alienation to it, carries an Argument in it to the contrary. In a Word, What a Change and Turn for the better would the Practice of it make in us? What a Similitude would it give us to Heaven, and how many of the Lines of that World would it draw upon us? When Moses had been in the Mount with

with God, he came down with a transform'd Countenance, *Exod.* xxxiv. 29. and the same happy Effects would this Duty work in us. In a Word, We should get up to Heaven, dwell there, and be unwilling to come down thence.

4. Look after and endeavour to perfect your Preparations for Heaven: See that you be growing and fitting up for it. Now this lies in an Acquisition, and getting all Requisites and Qualifications, that that will give us a Meetness for it; making Improvements in all Things proper thereunto. You are not Strangers to the Matter of these Preparations: In short, they are Grace and Holiness, with whatever will procure us an Introduction or Admittance into Blessedness, *Mat. xxv. 10, And they that were ready went in with him to the Marriage.* There are Varieties of Preparations for Heaven. All that are taken thither are not equally and alike qualified for it, but some have more, and some less of 'em. We may reckon up two Kinds of 'em: Those of the lowest Kind, those without which we cannot obtain Heaven, which we may call celestial Ones; and gradual Ones, those that have something super-added, some additional Lines put to the former. We must not think, that what we have already attain'd is sufficient, and rest there; but must seek and follow after farther Ones. But we may conceive gradual Preparations more particularly to lie in these Things following:

§1. In farther and greater Refinements and Purifications of Soul, when the Dregs of Sin and Corruption are more and more work'd out and taken away. The more that a Work of Mortification advances, the fitter a Person grows for Heaven. The fewer and lesser Spots we have upon us, the more agreeable we must needs be

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to a holy World. The Church Christ will present to himself must be without *Spot or Wrinkle*, Eph. v. 27. This then we should pursue after, to get the Stains of Sin more and more defac'd and taken away.

[2. It consists in the Amplification, Enlargement, and Extension of the Powers and Faculties of the Soul, and in larger Exercises of 'em; in gaining a Liberation and Freedom from that Straitness, Weakness, and Narrowness that Sin has brought upon the Soul, and when it acts with greater Strength and Vigour; when the Desires of it in Love and Aspirations towards God and heavenly Things are become stronger and more vehement; when it's impatient without God and Christ; and as the Psalmist expresses it, *Psa. lxiii. 8. follows hard after them and heavenly Things.* There are various Degrees of the Motions of Souls in and after spiritual Objects; and the more speedy they are, the more they resemble and come nearer the Saints in Glory.

[3. It lies in a Conformity and Agreeableness to Heaven in Heart and Life: When the Heart in its Principles, Dispositions, Frame, Inclinations, Actings and Ends, resembles Heaven. Some Hearts, as unregenerate, unsanctified Ones, lie cross to it; but renewed Ones have heavenly Lines upon 'em, have a Likeness to their's in Heaven, and act in Conformity to 'em, and are growing in a greater Similitude thereunto: So, when the Life corresponds with Heaven; when it's form'd according to the Rules of Holiness, according to the Gospel, and Heaven itself; when it has more and more of God and that World in it; is more and more polish'd and beautified with Acts of Piety, Goodness and

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Charity; when our Converse and Business is in Heaven, *Phil. iii. 20.* when Persons are much there where God and Christ are, and are taken up with Things and Matters that are sublime and excellent; and their Lives have a Tendency that Way, point and lead towards Heaven, and center there. These are special Preparations for it, and we should be labouring to perfect ourselves in them, that we may grow up more and more for it.

[4. In glorifying God more, and being more taken up in the Concerns and Promotion of his Kingdom, Interest and Honour. This is the very Work of Heaven, and to be exercis'd in it is the Beginning of that Work on Earth, and a Leading to the Fruition of it hereafter.

In these and such like Ways it is that Persons may perfect their Preparations for Heaven, may grow ripe or be ripening for it. How much is it our Interest to acquire these and all such Excellencies, to be treasuring and laying up such Things, and be thus employ'd whilst we are here below!

5. EXERCISE and employ yourselves, and the Graces of the holy Spirit that God has given you, much upon Heaven. Heaven and heavenly Things are the special Objects of Believers: Grace, and the Exercise of it, is the proper Means and Way of being conversant about those great Matters, absent Objects. All Grace has an Aptitude to work that Way, to act Heaven-wards, and for this End it's bestow'd and given us.

[1. THE Grace of Faith. We shall consider it differently to what we did before. This Grace acts forth upon Heaven various Ways: It confideth the Reality, Verity and Excellency of un-seen Things, and is of sovereign Use about 'em.

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The Apostle tells us, *Heb. xi. 1.* that it is the Substance of Things hoped for. It carries the Eye of a Believer towards, or is the Eye of the Soul fix'd on Heaven, and draws the Heart after it, or along with it thither: And is not this a very necessary Point, to have both the Eye and Heart there? A Christian should live by Faith till he live by Sight, till he come to the Gates of Heaven, come into full and perfect Vision. Never lay aside the Eye of Faith till Death close the Eye of Sense, and till then we should grow in it more and more.

[2. THE Grace of Love. This a Believer should be swallow'd up in the Exercise of. And Heaven and heavenly Things are the chief and grand Objects of it. These are the great Attractives of Love, infinitely enough to draw all Hearts towards 'em. It is the World of Love, and calls for Love from all its Candidates; and there all should dwell by Love, and desire whilst they are here below. These Things we may love, and take our Fill of holy and divine Love, and after all, be guilty of Defect and Coldness. This Work and Practice will be excellently useful and comfortable, will elevate and transport the Soul thither, and be a sure Argument of coming thither at the last. This will quicken our Motions that Way, and carry us thro' all the Waters of Difficulties and Oppositions that withstand us thitherward, *Cant. viii. 7.* *Many Waters cannot quench Love, neither can the Floods drown it.* Kindle then this Sacred Fire of Love and Desire in your Souls after Heavens; let it burn upwards, and you'll find happy Effects of it. This lays the Way to Heaven open indeed, and will give Admittance thither abundantly; when all that are not Lovers of it, will assuredly be excluded.

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[3. THE Grace of Hope. We have many Objects of Hope; but of all of 'em there's none comparable to that of Heaven, none parallel or like unto this. The Apostle speaks of it as exceeding all others, *Col. i. 5. For the Hope which is laid up for you in Heaven*; i. e. the Hope of heavenly Felicity, that is the great Animator of Christians, and a great Motive to 'em in Duty, and an Encouragement in their Progress towards it. And there's nothing that's a more certain Ground of Hope, than that of Heaven, to Believers. The Hopes of other Things may fail us, but this cannot; and because of the great Efficacy of it, it's call'd a lively Hope, *1 Pet. i. 3. Which hath begotten us again unto a lively Hope*. This is a certain and earnest Expectation of the promis'd Blessedness, and should always be cherish'd, and will be as a Spur and Anchor to us, *Heb. vi. 19. Which Hope we have as an Anchor of our Souls, both sure and stedfast*. This will make us purify ourselves, *1 John iii. 3.* and execute the Operation of other Graces in us. Let us get our Souls impregnated with this Grace, and act in a more lively Manner upon the future Glory. If the Hopes and Expectations of perishing Things will do much upon Persons, what will not those that are eternal and so weighty do?]

[4. THE Graces of Joy, Complacency and Delight, should be exercis'd on Heaven. It is the Excellency and Suitableness of Things that makes 'em the Objects and Matter of our Complacency and Delight. Now they are so either as foreseen, or as actually enjoy'd. In the latter Sense, Heaven is the Delight of the Saints that are possess'd of it, *Ps. xvi. 11. In thy Presence is Fulness of Joy, &c.* The Presence of God, his emitted Beams and Manifestations, beget a compleat

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pleat Satisfaction and Ravishment in the Soul. And in the former Sense, Heaven is the Master of a Christian's Delight and Joy, as beheld at a Distance, as hoped for and expected: It's Ground of Joy; it scatters its Beams, emits 'em into this lower World, and fills the Hearts of the Saints with Gladness, and makes 'em rejoice in it. This is one of the Entertainments that we should give to this blessed World, *Rom. v. 2. And rejoice in hope of the Glory of God.* *1 Pet. i. 8. Ye rejoice with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory.* All our Delights in other Things should be call'd in, and laid forth upon Heaven. It's the great Fault of Christians that they are so little exercis'd in a Delight in God and Christ, and other heavenly Objects.

To close this Head: Let us see then how great a Duty it is, and what Reason we have to exercise Grace upon unseen Things, and what the Advantages of it will be.

6. *LIVE in Waitings, Expectations and Longings after the Enjoyment and Fruition of Heaven.* As those that are in Service in foreign Countries desire to be call'd home, or as the Jews in the Wilderness long'd to be in Canaan, or as Persons thirst for the Harbour when they have been in Storms at Sea; so should it be with the Godly with respect to Heaven. This is what we have both Commands and Precedents for, *Tit. ii. 13. Looking for the blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the Great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* *1 Cor. i. 7. Waiting for the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* And we find the like Spirit in the Church in *Cant. viii. 14. Make haste, my Beloved; and be thou like a Roe, or a young Hart, upon the Mountains of Spices.* And in *Rev. xxii. 17. the Spirit and the Bride say, Come,* i. e. the Spirit in the

the Bride saith *Come*: And Verse 20. *Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so come Lord Jesus.* Christ assures the Church that he will come, and he echoes thereunto with her Supplications, Desires and Longings, that he will do so. All that are true Believers have the Habit and Principle of such Desires, but only the most lively Ones have actual Longings after it. The Saints in the present Life are a Company of Expectants, waiting for the good Hour of their Presement, when Christ will come, that he may conduct 'em to everlasting Glory. And this is what all the Godly should endeavour to work themselves up unto, and have in exercise. If there be any Objects, any Things worthy of earnest Aspiration and Breathings of our Souls, it's certainly heavenly Ones: After them it is that we should be continually breathing and longing for the Fruition of 'em. Here we might shew, that it's much better being in Heaven than on Earth, and on what Accounts it is so. The Apostle has asserted it for an unquestionable Truth, with the Reasons of it, *Phil. i. 23. Having a Desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.* *1 Cor. xiii. 12. For now we see thro' a Glass darkly, but then Face to Face; now I know in part, but then I shall know, even as also I am known.* So *2 Cor. v. 8. We are confident and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord.* Then we shall put off all Imperfections, Sin, Corruption, and Mortality will be swallow'd up, and no Remnants of 'em left: The Veils will be rent and broken, and an eternal Day will break forth and shine upon us. Then we shall be perfectly obedient to the Will of God, and do him more Service, and be more pleasing to him, than we can be in this World, being replenish'd with all heavenly

venly Gifts and Graces, as Vessels fill'd up to the Brim. A few Acts of Worship perform'd in Heaven will conduce more to the Glory of God, than many Years Services of the present Life can amount unto. Then we shall be instated in all celestial Privileges, Enjoyments and Honours, that are unspeakable and innumerable.

AND should not these, with many such, Arguments raise, excite and draw forth our Souls in great Longings and Desires after Heaven? Who would not be athirst after the Possession of such glorious Things? Should we not say, Oh when shall that happy Time approach, that we may pass into this *Canaan*, enter upon that Inheritance, leave all our Sorrows, and go to be fill'd with, and Partakers of the heavenly Felicities; drink of those *Rivers of Pleasures that are at God's right Hand for evermore*? Let me charge thee then, O my Soul, to forget Heaven no more; to spend and lay out thine Affections upon nothing else: Let that have all: See that all thy Powers be carried forth that Way: Seek nothing; follow after nothing comparatively hereunto. Oh! for a Sight, a full and everlasting Vision, a Taste and Draught, a full Fruition and Participation of those Excellencies and Glories, that Rest that's provided and remains for the People of God.



F I N I S.